The Saturday Review of Literature

VOL. XVI NO. 22 NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1937 TEN CENTS A COPY

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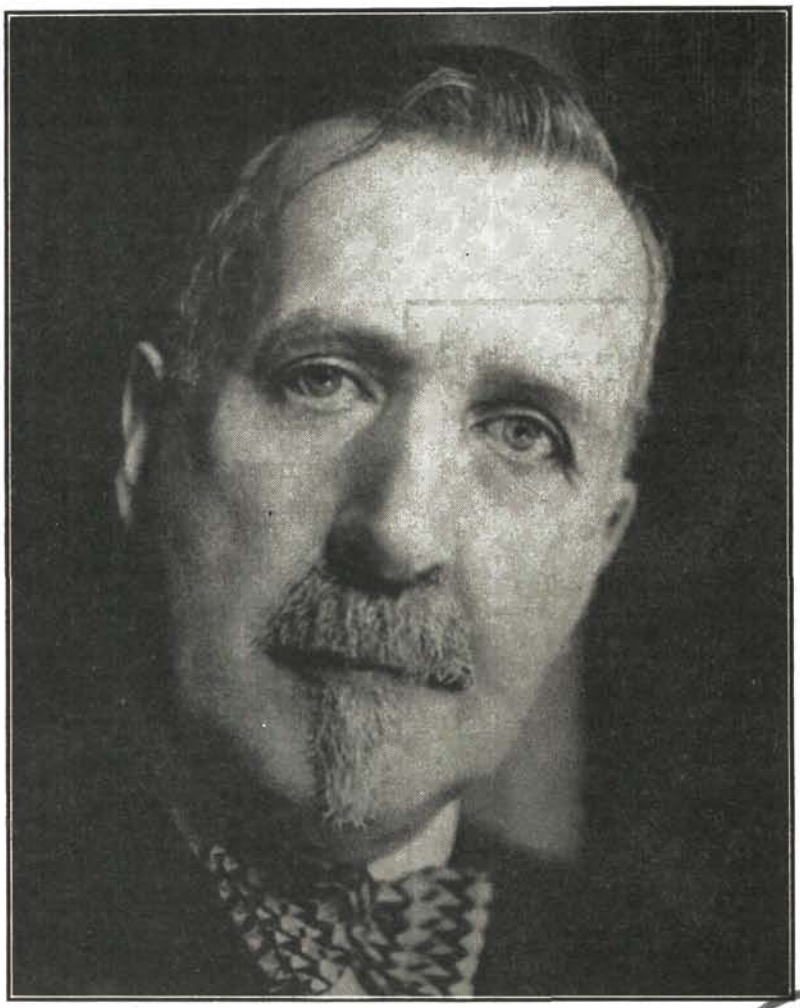

HEINRICH MANN

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"In the troubled but conquering career of Henry he found a subject made to his hand . . . a brilliant development of the theme that power which has grown too sure inevitably becomes stupid" . . . *(See page 5)*

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The Lineage of Eustace Tilley

BY BERNARD DEVOTO

"AN Amerikan luvs tew laff," Josh Billings says in a passage reprinted in Mr. Walter Blair's new anthology,* "but he don't luv tew make a bizzness ov it; he works, eats, and haw-haws on a canter." Josh was making a pretty profitable business of it in the *Century* and other magazines and especially on the lecture platform when he wrote the aphorism, but his observation was sound. American humor developed under the amateur spirit and began to decline—as a literary form, that is—when it was professionalized. In the same essay, Josh (whom Mr. Max Eastman recently described as the father of Imagism, which is pretty hard on King Solomon) made another observation that will bear repeating: "Americans love caustick things; they would prefer turpentine tew cologne-water, if they had tew drink either. So with their relish of humor; they must have it on the half-shell with cayenne."

The Jumping Frog: redrawn from the first edition.

Let us place on file some American state papers, and then return to our business in an orderly manner. Under date of October 24, 1862, the President writes to Gen. George B. McClellan, commanding the Army of the Potomac:

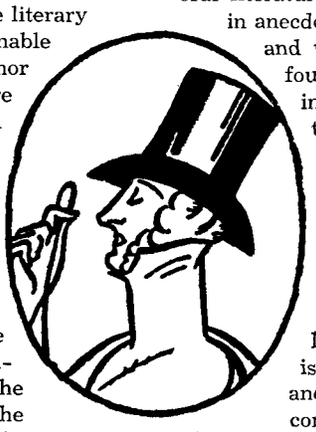
> I have just read your dispatch about sore-tongued and fatigued horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigues anything?
>
> A. Lincoln.

A year later, the President sends a note to his Secretary of War:

> I personally wish Jacob Freese, of New Jersey, to be appointed Colonel of a colored regiment, and this regardless of whether he can tell the exact shade of Julius Caesar's hair.

The Americans' fondness for haw-hawing on a canter may be observed in the fines assessed against it at Plymouth Plantation, and as soon as there are Englishmen on tour in the provinces it is made clear that the provincials were a people incurably addicted to telling stories. Before the end of the seventeenth century they must have forged an idiom, accent, and turn of thought as recognizably American as the last clause quoted from Lincoln, but for another century you will find little of it in what they wrote. The humor of Benjamin Franklin's formal writing is eighteenth-century London humor; that of his letters is more native, but it is only in his quoted remarks that you get the pure thing. If he truly said that we must all hang together or we should hang separately, he was speaking classical American, though the classics were not yet written. Even more unmistakably, so was the first Yankee who remarked of Franklin's birth that though Ben's keel was laid on Nantucket, his mother went to Boston to launch him. The provincials had been talking that way for a long time, but it took them a good many more years to learn to write that way.

This oral humor was the compost in which our native literary humor sprouted—an indefinable but sharply individual humor with more poetry and more fantasy in it than most, with its own imagery, its own accent and intonation, its own patterns of thought. The sound of the human voice, in fact, was a direct conditioner of all American literature throughout its early stages: down to the middle of the nineteenth century the historian can read the printed page aright only if he keeps in mind the lectern, the lyceum, and the innumerable forms of American oratory.



Eustace Tilley of The New Yorker.

Mr. Blair repeatedly stresses the oral foundations in his long introduction, which is the best and most comprehensive critical history of American humor yet written. He appears to have read all the humor there is, everything that has ever been written about it, and the full range of American literature on which it impinges. He is occasionally, in fact, too scholarly for my taste: in his enthusiasm for his subject he almost persuades himself that metaphor is a purely humorous invention, and not all his exploration of sources impresses me. In any department of literature the source-hunt is usually dubious the moment it gets beyond fashions and conventions, and the basic situations and mechanisms of humor are so implicit in experience that you might as well turn to Aristophanes at once and do your further groping backward into the old stone age. But Mr. Blair is too intelligent and too learned to take his occasional ventures into scholarly technique very seriously. His study is historical, analytical, and critical. It brings its variegated and essentially chaotic subject into as much order as can be imposed on it. It contains fundamental judgments on American humor; and, unifying and extending much pioneering work that has been done in the last few years, it phrases principles that must hereafter be taken into account in all critical study of American literature at large.

Humor became a literary form in America, Mr. Blair finds, when writers began to utilize in print the delight in native character, native types, and native eccentricity that had so long fertilized our oral literature. Two types long matured in anecdote and folklore, the Yankee and the Frontiersman, suddenly found memorable celebration in print at about the same time, and the significant thing is that Major Jack Downing and Colonel David Crockett were figures of both fiction and political satire. Let us pass quickly over the latter, since I shall be writing about it at some length later on this year. It is one of our most important and has been one of our most continuous traditions, though Mr. Lewis Mumford once announced that there were only three American satires before "The Theory of the Leisure Class" and that these three (one of them being "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court")

Next Week

LIMITATIONS OF MORALISTS
By ELMER DAVIS
LINCOLN'S RISE TO POWER
By WILLIAM E. BARRINGER
Reviewed by Allan Nevins

* *NATIVE AMERICAN HUMOR* (1800-1900). *Edited, with an introduction, by Walter Blair. New York: The American Book Company.* 1937. $3.

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were pretty weak and footless. Our literature would be immeasurably poorer without the distinguished line that begins with Jack Downing and moves through Simon Suggs and Hosea Biglow to Mr. Dooley and Alexander Throttlebottom. Realistic, disenchanted, completely devoid of reverence, that tradition has been an active force in our democracy, and that it has been watered down in recent years is one of the graver phenomena of the times. Mr. Blair admits Will Rogers to the company of our cracker-box commentators, but though the highest-paid of them all he fell miles behind Bill Arp and Petroleum V. Nasby, and light-years behind Mr. Dooley and Mark Twain.

It was in the realistic perception of native character that humor first invaded and then possessed the American novel. Here also it was a democratizing force. The earliest realism in our fiction is the intrusion of some low and usually rustic fellow as comedy relief to the gothic goings-on of the romantic leads. He is condescended to but he is drawn with a sharp eye to truth. The heroes tend to come from Mrs. Radcliffe and the heroines, as like as not, are from Bernardin de St. Pierre, but Nimrod Wildfire is from the life. Nimrod was born in the newspaper humor of the thirties and forties, and this rested squarely on the anecdotal humor, the insatiable yarning of the natives. It took him less than twenty years to capture fiction, he has never relinquished his domination, he has not been condescended to, and the main current of American fiction has been realistic primarily because our humorists made it so.

The job was done by a group most of whom lived on and wrote about the southwestern frontier. Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, George W. Harris, Johnson J. Hooper, William Tappan Thompson, and Joseph G. Baldwin were the best of the group, which numbers several dozen principal names. Their importance in our literary history had been singularly neglected until recent years. They were humorists, they were even amateur humorists, but they created American realism. Mr. Blair argues persuasively that they, with their Yankee colleagues, created our regionalism as well, and it is certainly true that the path leads straight from them to the "local color" school of a later generation, and past that to the more self-conscious theorists of today. They gave our fiction, if not its first localities, then certainly its first living communities. But, what is most important, they were the first American writers to make fiction out of the life immediately about them. They enormously enjoyed it and they were shrewd men, men with a gift not only for dramatic story-telling but for style as well. Much of what they wrote is dull now, of course, but it is astonishing how much more is far from dull. Much of Longstreet, much of Hooper and Thompson, and rather more of Harris will last indefinitely. One of Longstreet's stories (which, to be sure, he picked up from an elder friend) was good enough to serve Thomas Hardy's uses, and at least once Hooper beat Mark Twain at Mark's best game.

Mark Twain is, of course, the culmination of one part of this humor. "Huckleberry Finn" is a masterpiece of American fiction precisely as it brings the moods and materials and methods of this humor to expression on the level of genius. Other strains went on to create the local color writing of the eighties and nineties and still others to beget Br'er Rabbit. Like Mark Twain, Joel Chandler Harris is a phenomenon of southwestern humor. That area of fantasy, which includes not only such mythology as Harris practised but the tall talk and the tall tales as well, is native to our humor but has lain fallow for a long time. There are hints of it in Faulkner, Andrew Lytle touched it briefly but memorably in "The Long Night,"

SIMON SUGGS:
Ancestor of Throttlebottom.

Roark Bradford and occasionally other Southern novelists glance at it, but mostly it has reverted to its original condition. Give an accomplished Southerner a hooker of corn and the center of the stage and you soon learn that the stories are still there, waiting for literature to overtake them again and be enriched.

This area of our humor has been too little studied and will repay further investigation. It is most important, however, to study the images and intonations of our native humor. Everything that can be said about its mechanisms and devices has been said, and our gain has not been inordinate. But if it is really desirable to isolate the essential American qualities, the most promising approach is to examine the way the thing is said. Mr. Blair quotes a phrase of Mark Twain's, "The calm confidence of a Christian with four aces." No English reader would get the full beauty of the phrase and no Englishman who ever lived would, or could, have written it. It lifts the American pulse-beat because it is a perfect marriage of meaning, rhythm, and expression flowering in a poetic image. In exactly the same way an American esthetics is gratified when Mr. Lincoln forestalls argument about his appointee's ignorance of military minutiae by dragging in Caesar's hair. When A. Ward writes to an editor, "My perlitical sentiments agree with yourn exactly. I know they do, becawz I never saw a man whoos didn't," the comment is international but the phraseology, which has nothing to do with the spelling but is intimately bound to the rhythm, is absolute American. The criticism of humor ought to devote itself to style, to the ring of the words in the ear, to the thought finding a native idiom.

I have remarked that the important Southwestern humorists were amateurs. They were lawyers, doctors, country edi-

(*Continued on page* 20)

Sonnet in Bitterness

By JOSEPHINE JOHNSON

LET the dark power strike! I shall not care—
I give my body gladly to the dust,
And if my spirit scatter on the air
So be it! Air holds stranger things in trust.
Tell me of none who mark the sparrow's fall—
What use to mark, and lift no hand to stay?
"Thy hairs are numbered." Numbered, that is all—
The children starve by thousands every day!

Only the earth is faithful, kind and true—
However the storms of heaven beat down upon her
She brings her increase forth in season due,
And gives to man, the spent and desperate runner,
All that he knows of beauty, peace and grace,
His one sure joy, his certain resting place!

To avoid confusion, the editors note that the author of the foregoing poem is not the Josephine Johnson who wrote "Now in November." The latter Miss Johnson, some of whose poems we have printed from time to time, always signs her verse "Josephine W. Johnson."

THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, published weekly by the Saturday Review Company, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y. Noble A. Cathcart, President and Treasurer; Henry Seidel Canby, Vice-President and Chairman; Amy Loveman, Secretary. Subscription, $3.50 a year. Vol. XVI, No. 22, September 25, 1937. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Henry the Great

YOUNG HENRY OF NAVARRE. By Heinrich Mann. Translated by Eric Sutton. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by KATHARINE ANTHONY

HERE is a novel written by a man in exile. Composed in one country, copyrighted in another, and published in still another, Heinrich Mann's book is testimony that nothing can disturb his talent. The fine security of a soul which can work and create in such uprooted circumstances commands our admiration and wonder. Indeed it is doubtful whether he would have chosen to tell the story of Henry of Navarre at all had the conditions of his own life been different. In the troubled but conquering career of Henry he found a subject made to his hand.

Henry of Navarre like Elizabeth of England accomplished the seemingly impossible in thrusting the Spaniards out of his kingdom. These two rulers of little kingdoms scotched the ruler of the world. Heinrich Mann's life of Henry is a brilliant development of the theme that power which has grown too sure inevitably becomes stupid. The contest between the quick-witted but resourceless Henry and the powerful but dunder-headed Spanish is one of the main threads of the story.

"Young Henry of Navarre" is gorgeous history. Sixteenth century France with all its luxury, poverty, cruelty, wars, dynasties, politics, is momentarily called back to life. It lives again in the form of the chief actors in the scene and in the pattern of cause and effect which inheres in human affairs. Catherine de Medici, with her plump little hands, her narrow active mind, and her suave, secret cruelties is unforgettably pictured for us. So is the fledgling King of Navarre, her prisoner for three years, who learned in the long duel of wits with her that which was to serve him well in the future. The obdurate Jeanne d'Albret, who brought up her royal son like a peasant boy, is envisaged as the forerunner of the bold Protestant leader. The horror of St. Bartholomew's Day reaches our emotions; but a lightning-flash of intellect also reaches our judgment, as we see in the horrible Day a profound political mistake. It comes as close to us as an error made yesterday in Congress. Similarly and with the same odious nearness, the Duke of Guise stands out as the Führer of the League which, composed of rabble and supported by Spanish gold, crushed the reigning kings and threatened to dismember France. The powerlessness of mere gold against a great idea was never more convincingly presented. No student of sixteenth century France, no student of history in our own times, can fail to be enthralled by the author's lifelike handling of a heroic period.

The character of Henry of Navarre has always had a strong attraction for imaginative people. Catherine the Great kept his portrait hanging before her on the wall. Voltaire expended his best talent in a long heroic poem on Henry's life and deeds. Both had a personal sympathy with his position in the religious wars; and Catherine perhaps liked to reflect on the nature of one who was as unstable in love as she herself. But the drama of character which Henry presented for them as for everyone else was not confined to a couple of striking traits. He was one of the most highly organized individuals in history. Here was a man who remained natural in the midst of a world of affectation and artificiality. The novelist shows this with a single swift stroke as he allows the kisses of the natural man to fall on the lacquered face of his wife. More complex was Henry's leadership of the two antagonistic factions of the French people. But again the novelist succeeds by the same economy of method. "My Huguenots are murdering my Catholics," Henry cries out with real anguish.

No one has ever penetrated the secret of his amazing character as thoroughly as Heinrich Mann has done in this book. It is a splendid novel, a fine history, and a glorious comment on life.

Katharine Anthony is the author of several historical biographies, among them lives of Catherine the Great, Queen Elizabeth, and Marie Antoinette.

Four Lives in Iowa

REMEMBERING LAUGHTER. By Wallace Stegner. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1937. $1.25.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

THIS novel deals with the consciences of some intransigent Scotch moralists. The casual fertility of a rich Iowa farm and of the animals that live on it are too much for the unpractised virtue of two of the characters, but John Calvin, who had so woefully failed to prepare Alec and Elspeth for the temptations of the flesh, had wrought tragically better with the spirit. Alec's wife detects her husband and her sister in the preliminaries of a carnal conversation; there is no resource in any of them to solve the situation, or to dismiss it, and the three lives end in a bitter stalemate. A fourth life, that of Elspeth's inevitable son by Alec, supplies the conflict for the final, most important movement of the book. Before he dies Alec remembers laughter. It would be unreasonable to say much more of the plot of a book that can be read in two hours.

Mr. Stegner, who has not published any long fiction before this novelette, has built a narrative which comes startlingly close to perfection. In many ways it will remind everyone who reads it of "Ethan Frome." It has the same quiet strength and simplicity in structure and style. The characterizations are not as mature or subtle as those in Mrs. Wharton's novelette but they are well-realized, and this story has dramatic relief from the tragic mood in Alec's tall tales and the opulence of the farm life.

There is no use to mention the assurance and calm competence that Mr. Stegner brings to his first book—it has to be read to be believed. The story is so beautifully fitted together that the author is able to tie up his whole thesis, résumé, catastrophe, and climax in a dozen lines at the bottom of page 143.

"Remembering Laughter" is the $2500 winner of Little, Brown's novelette contest. Stegner is an Iowan, about thirty, entitled to be addressed as Doctor Stegner owing to a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. At present he is an instructor in English at the University of Utah.

He must be a good one.

Phil Stong is a journalist and novelist, author of "State Fair," "Buckskin Breeches," and other works of fiction.

FROM THE JACKET DESIGN OF "REMEMBERING LAUGHTER"

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Fragments of a Personality

HALL OF MIRRORS. By Lenore G. Marshall. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM MAXWELL

MRS. MARSHALL'S first novel, "Only the Fear," was widely praised. Her second is about a young woman faced with blindness, and might very well have been as satisfactory a book. It is a story that has been written many times, but for the purposes of fiction a familiar story is as good as any other, providing it is retold with imagination and feeling. Unfortunately those qualities are lacking from "Hall of Mirrors." The author has apparently allowed herself to become preoccupied with an elaborate and obtrusive technique, and with a philosophical idea that is not in itself interesting. The truth about any human being is momentary, she would have us believe—those of us who don't already. If we know people at all, we know them in fragments. At the breakfast table Margaret Clay, Mrs. Marshall's heroine, is one person to her excitable five-year-old daughter, and another to Griselda, her large, slow-moving colored cook. She is a still different person for her husband, who is the editor of a great New York newspaper, and for the woman friend with whom she is having luncheon. Like the seven blind men and the elephant, each has a definite idea of her; each is partly right and partly wrong.

The minds of Margaret Clay's family, her doctor, and her friends are arranged about her so that, throughout a single day, they give back thoughfully her profile, or her full face, or her bent head. Sometimes it is only her winter hat that is caught and reflected. The author intended these mirrors to reflect Margaret Clay's personality inaccurately and only in part, but there are so many of them, and they are by and large so unconvincing, that for this reader the red hat was more real and more important than the woman who wore it.

William Maxwell is the author of "They Came Like Swallows."

A Finnish Prize Novel

KATRINA. By Sally Salminen. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH

ABOUT a year ago this fresh, ingenuous novel was sent to Helsingfors by a young Finnish woman who had worked in New York for five years as a domestic servant in order to find time and opportunity to write it. By a unanimous vote, her publishers tell us, it won the prize in the Helsingfors novel contest, and was soon selling in nine countries in all of which it met success. Translated from the Swedish, it now is offered to American readers.

From the jacket of "Katrina."

Gay, proud Katrina marries the sailor Johan and joyously leaves her father's north Finland farm to go "south" to the Aland Island in the Bay of Bothnia where, he promises her, she shall pick up apples in "the dewey grass" and become a fashionable lady. But John proves to be but a swaggering braggart. They no sooner arrive than he goes back to his ship, leaving her with neither food, money, nor any knowledge of the ways of the new land. At once she realizes that "she must sell her strength for bread to live on." Although Katrina is a rebel she is forced to submit to the feudal control of the rich man of the town, and from now on the story is that of her struggles and victories; of how she makes the hovel into the home in which she spends all the rest of her life; of her haying and threshing; of the children she bears to Johan, and of how they leave her; of the sublimation of her bitterness against her husband into a pitying and understanding affection. It is the story of a courageous, fulfilled life under circumstances that seem almost insurmountable. The manner of its telling is so simple as to baffle sophisticated criticism as completely as does a Norse saga. Miss Salminen, like all true story-tellers, is obsessed by her subject, and she unfolds her tale much as story-tellers must have spun their yarns before novel-writing technique was born. She has a vivid sense of character, a keen eye for drama and her sets, and an almost childlike naiveté. The combination of these qualities produces an effect on the reader as freshly different from that of the usual American novel as Finland is from New York.

TONY LUJAN

True Confession

EDGE OF TAOS DESERT. By Mabel Dodge Luhan. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by CURRIE CABOT

WHEN one has finished a book by Mrs. Luhan, one is left with an impression, not of the book itself, but of the insistent and baffling personality of the author. One feels that only a skilled confessor or a psychologist is qualified to make a chart of what lies behind this artfully presented picture of a life; to divine what, with all the frankness, has been left unsaid.

Salvation, it would seem, has been Mrs. Luhan's aim—salvation being a permission of conscience to consider oneself right and good. And the beginnings of salvation, if one may believe Mrs. Luhan, came to her through her divination of the communal spirit of the Taos Indians, and her relationship with Tony Lujan, which for the first time taught her the human reality of someone beside herself. "Edge of Taos Desert," part travel book, part novel, part confession, is the story of her discovery of the Indians and of Tony, who remains, as always, the dignified, stolid, slightly mysterious figure familiar to our imaginations. It must be said that the book presents a picture of a very real relationship between two human beings. It is less sharply etched, less malicious and diverting than Mrs. Luhan's other books. There are as usual, the vivid passages of description, where the New Mexican landscape is literally painted for us, and the sketched bits of character, but the book has been arranged to form an idyll. There are a good many moments of slightly fatuous sentiment, and worse still, beneath the idyll, one sometimes discerns an ironic picture of ruthlessness.

The book abounds in paragraphs of intuition and divination, and in others of pseudo-mysticism and pseudo-philosophy. Mrs. Luhan's approach to the Indian has some faint resemblance to Lawrence's and Jung's reachings towards an understanding of primitive consciousness, but one feels that her Indians are idealized.

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Neighbors to the South

SOUTH BY THUNDERBIRD. By Hudson Strode. New York: Random House. 1937. $3.

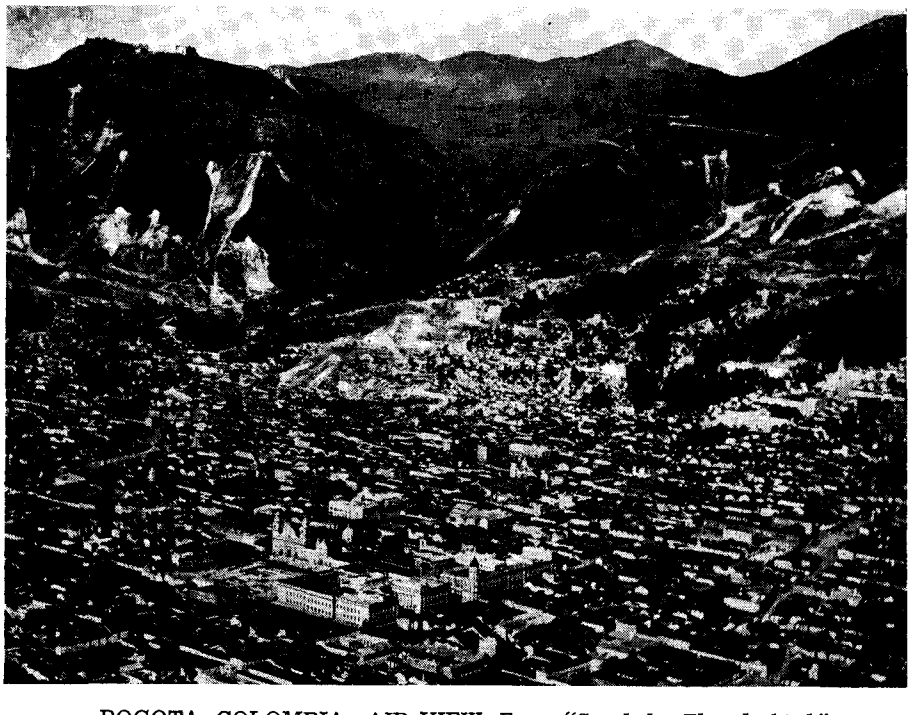
Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

WHEN the Indians of South America first saw an airplane, they called it "the thunderbird," and pursued it to find its eggs. Even they could understand that if such eggs could be hatched, and the "birds" developed, they would prove a means to prosperity. Pan American Airways, hatching lustily, has largely fulfilled the Indians' dream since the first airmail flew to Cuba in 1927; and it has contributed not a little to international accord by the transport of just such prudent travelers as Hudson Strode.

Mr. Strode, whose books on Cuba and Bermuda remain unexcelled, has written a comprehensive story of the South American republics, of their political economy, their agricultural and industrial promise, their distinctive character. Traveling by air gave him an initial perspective and longer visits on land during the time he could afford.

Stopping first in Colombia—which is now only twenty-four hours from New York—he found a raw nation where inept bullfighters were doused in the public fountain and it was "better to be born a rich dog than a poor man." He flew along the coast to Santiago, through Ecuador, a sweatshop nation producing hats and smoked human heads, over Peru, where the great gold mines, at last made accessible by plane, are worked by the drugged descendants of Incan millionaires, and into virile Chile, one of the few countries in the world today without an unemployment problem. Even the purple twilight of Argentina, and the "ladies adorable," could not atone to him for the ornate and materialistic Buenos Aires. Little Uruguay, neglected by most writers, completely enthralled him with its courage and humanity. And Brazil depressed him again, a gauche and gangling nation precociously embittered by its loss of the rubber market. There was Rio, of course, and a wealth of diamonds in the jungle; and coffee and maté were anodyne, but Brazil remained a desperate land still awaiting her tomorrow. As Mr. Strode flew over the three Guianas on the final lap of his journey he thought of the new esteem of South America for the United States, insured by Roosevelt's good-neighbor policy. There is some appreciation at last of the American engineering and industry which have shown the southern republics how to help themselves. And there is every promise that the two continents may coöperate for the peace and prosperity of their hemisphere.

This résumé is not to suggest that Mr. Strode saw only the heavy mechanism of life in South America. He was acquainted with bars and the individuals at them. He was entertained lavishly. Wherever he went, whether it was across the Andes (on a flight more sensitively described than Paul Morand's) or into the abattoirs, he brought a grand humor with him. Fact and impression are balanced in his book. His personal adventure is always pleasant, his reportage as accurate as sound research and discretion can make it. And the book is excellently written.



BOGOTA, COLOMBIA—AIR VIEW. *From "South by Thunderbird."*

THE HOUSE IN ANTIGUA. By Louis Adamic. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

OF the three great capitals founded in the New World within a couple of generations of its discovery, Mexico and Lima have survived to become thriving modern cities. Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, now known as Antigua, was dramatically removed from the stream of time in two minutes of the eighteenth century. Since the earthquake that caused it to be deserted, its life has been suspended like that of a frog sealed in a stone, and those who visit it today find themselves abruptly carried back into the past. They discover a crumbling eighteenth century city in the shadow of towering volcanoes, a fantasy of nature to rival the fictional fantasies of those writers who have imagined time-machines to take us out of the present.

Louis Adamic went to Antigua last winter with the simple intention of spending a few weeks away from the "frenzied confusions" of twentieth century New York. He stepped into it as casually as Alice stepped into the rabbit-hole, and was promptly held captive. The tribute he had to pay before his escape was this book, which tells the significant story of the ruin, now restored, that housed him during his stay. His account is patterned on the legend of the phoenix; its emphasis is on the restoration by the Popenoes, whose story is now an integral part of the history of the house, rather than on the original creation, and he interprets it as a symbol of man's ultimate triumph over nature. "Here Nature challenged him, tore down his handiwork; he accepted the challenge and the house is up again, perhaps better than ever, challenging the elements." That its architecture may be merely a museum anachronism in a present-day environment is a possibility he does not consider. To him the loving labor with which it was restored is a portent full of hope for our quaking world, and one would like to believe he is right.

Don Luis de las Infantas Mendoza y Venegas was a brilliant young colonial administrator of the Spanish crown when he built this house in Santiago some three hundred years ago. It was designed in the Moorish-Renaissance style characteristic of the houses of Seville and, when it was completed, stood essentially as an expression of its times. Mr. Adamic has captured the spirit of Antigua as well as been captured by it. His literary restoration has a reverence and simplicity that matches the work of the Popenoes. As a result the book contains the timeless charm of its subject.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW is indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

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The WPA Guides

PLANNED economy is bringing out the WPA guides to New England, just in time to miss the summer tourist season. Some rich scenes have attended their appearance but, we understand, there have been much richer ones in private. Heaven help the compiler of a guidebook when a public body is examining the product to determine whether the town dump has been libeled or enough space has been given to the available water power. We hear — oh, quite unofficially—that chambers of commerce and state publicity bureaus and the like have been most vexed in Maine. (If we've heard wrong, please correct us. We'd like to go into the subject, and we know from experience that Maine libels awful easy.)

Maybe the WPA writers got round to describing US 1 in Maine. Maybe they said that it looks like a tornado strewing a sizable junk yard over Coney Island on the Fourth of July. That would be emphasis by understatement, and if the chamber of commerce was annoyed, let it start cleaning up Vacationland. For fifty miles north of the New Hampshire line, and in long stretches beyond, US 1, which the road signs call New England Beautiful, badly needs a slum-clearance project, though the tourist is supposed to have fun there. It looks pinchbeck, gaudy, unsanitary, scrofulous, pock-marked. It's a vomitory. There's nothing soft about the State of Mainers: if the tourist is to enjoy his stay, he's got to be able to take it. Weekending among Fried Clam signs and old tin cans has never been our idea of a holiday. If the Maine Chamber of Commerce sees eye to eye with us, it should shut up when an honest writer says so in print and expend its energy raking up the cans.

Officials in Massachusetts had a public migraine because the Sacco-Vanzetti case was mentioned. They felt a certain complacence about Giles Corey, who belongs to history along with Sam Adams and the rest, but this was too much. They're out of luck: the case is on the record and it's going to stay there. They also ran a temperature about the chapter on labor conditions, and the town of Marlborough leaped to arms because the guide alleged that some strike-breakers had once been imported there. Maybe the guide was wrong—the director apologized—but we remember a number of signs outside of Massachusetts towns advertising cheap and contented labor. And even if Massachusetts had the best labor laws and policies in the Christian world, which it hasn't, why should the WPA guide, or any other, seek the imprimatur of politicians and chambers of commerce? Anything the mayor likes probably ought to be done over, and if the chamber of commerce is pleased the sub-director responsible for that part of the guide ought to be fired. Let's keep booster literature out of the Writers' Project. Recommended slogan as the remaining State guides come out: Forget about the Governor.

At the same time, we have never felt any pressing need for a chapter on labor relations in a tourist guide. When we are touring, we'd trade fifty pages of interpretation for one page of pertinent information. When we come into Marlborough we want to know where the Indian memorials are, how we can get some draft beer, and what is the shortest road to Stow. Our principal objection to the WPA guides so far is that they are all cluttered up with our cultural heritage, whereas we want something we can put in our pocket. Don't mistake us: we are lyrically grateful for what the Writers' Project has given us, but we don't think that people do their philosophical generalizing with fifty miles more to go before dinner. They want to know how to find the House of the Seven Gables; they will read a critical essay on New England literature when they get home. So far, in fact, the WPA has not published a real guide book—try touring Washington, D. C., carrying seven pounds of text. Maybe the next Writers' Project ought to be reducing these encyclopedias to Baedekers. It isn't a guidebook if you have to leave it in the car.

What of the Night? For some years now a college professor in one of the Southern states has been periodically sending out a form letter asking, What of the Night? Like everyone he is frightened by the signs in the heavens and he wonders if we other peerers into darkness discern anything that makes us think the light is coming. Like everyone he will, when enough of us have answered him, write a book. We have always thrown his letter away, along with the letters asking us to buy shirts, add our signature to the eight hundred and sixteen literary autographs amassed by a twelve-year-old boy in Wilkes-Barre, and supply brief biographies of fifty leading authors so that a high school girl in Dayton can write a theme. Belatedly, we realize that we have been acting churlishly. Some day we may want to write a book, too.

"Do you see any sound reasons for entertaining the prospect of an early spiritual awakening?"

Yea, brother. That which you have greatly hoped for has come upon you. The world is lousy with spirituality. Look around you, glance at the newspapers, read our competitors in polite journalism. Deep in the Kyffhäuser Redbeard has yawned and shrugged awake. His beard shatters the stone it has grown through. the old gods wake too, and a shriven and exalted people rejoice in their salvation and go forth crying holy names. They have been washed clean, brother, and their faith has made them whole, and a white robe has been given unto every one of them. They shall wait for a little season until their fellow-servants also and their brethren that shall be killed shall be fulfilled. (Rev., 7, 11.) Rise and sing, brother, for this is the clear stuff; the spiritual awakening is here.

Bind on your phylacteries, brother, and go forth and sing. Let the sea roar and all the trees of the wood rejoice, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. (Isa., 9, 3.) For the foster children of the she-wolf have seen the aloe blossoming in the waste places. Every one has a harp and a golden vial full of odors which are the prayers of saints, and in Africa and Spain they are spoiling the unbelievers till the land is full of blood and the third part of the sea is blood. Plenty of awakened spirituality where Rome sitteth upon the waters, brother.

And what of Enoch, brother, and all the spirits of just men made perfect? Play on your harp, for the spirit has waked there, too, where it is used to waking, and the doors are shut in the streets, and they rise up at the sound of a bird (Ecc., 12, 4), and nearly any other sound. Lots of spirituality in New Jerusalem, brother: they are stoning the prophets in the streets and the fig tree is casting its untimely figs. The first heaven and the first earth have passed away, in New Jerusalem, and there is a new heaven and a new earth. They need no candle there, brother, neither light of the sun, for all the people cry out with one voice. Or if any doesn't it is just too bad.

The heathen in the Far East have got pretty spiritual too, brother.

So far our spirituality hasn't waked much, Amen. We don't know how you feel about it in Arkansas but as for us, that's just fine. Watch and pray, brother. Go cut yourself a gad, and beat hell out of anyone who starts any spirit-awakening in your neighborhood. Let's use up our finger-rings for golden calves, brother, not war loans. Let's hold fast to covetousness and gluttony and the other sins that hold the spirit down. Let's not allow the American eye to wander away from vile, material things. We've got pretty far that way and, compared to the spiritual nations, we don't look so bad. If you see anybody fingering a seal, brother, or looking very long at a pale horse or a black horse, don't waste time. Take him and slay him at the passages of Jordan.

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Letters to the Editor: *Reminiscences of Stevenson*

From Stevenson's Stepdaughter

SIR:—From Doris N. Dalglish's scholarly book "Presbyterian Pirate" I learn that she considered "Weir of Hermiston" Stevenson's greatest work, but she feared that had the author finished that novel he might have spoilt it by a happy ending.

All that is known about Stevenson's plot of "Weir" is what I was able to tell Sir Sidney Colvin shortly after my stepfather's death, and I may have given the impression of a happy ending by saying that the lovers would marry in the end, and be taken by a Yankee sea captain to America.

It is well known that Stevenson's theory of good construction was to begin a tragic story on a serious note. In a letter to Barrie he wrote, "If you are going to make a book end badly it must end badly from the beginning. It is a blot on 'Richard Feverel,' for instance, that it begins to end well and then tricks you and ends badly."

As I remember the talks we had at Vailima when Stevenson dictated that story to me, it was destined from the beginning to be a tragedy—but tragedy like the fire that purifies gold. The terrible experiences the lovers suffered would have cleansed their hearts and brought out their finer qualities. Young Kustre especially was to be magnificent. Though the lovers were saved by the four Black Brothers and escaped in a Yankee ship, that would not have made a happy ending. I would call "Weir of Hermiston" a novel of character—the development of character through suffering.

When Mr. Stevenson dictated "St. Ives" to me we often stopped to rest, when we would talk idly of other things. With "Weir" it was very different. We were both intensely interested and so keyed up to the excitement of the story that hours would pass. Then suddenly Louis, who walked up and down the room as he dictated, would stop and remorsefully apologize while I fell back in my chair limp with fatigue. But that would be for a few minutes only. I was always eager to go on.

I heard both R. L. S. and his wife (my mother) tell about the publication of "A Child's Garden of Verse." Louis thought little of these poems but waked up to interest at Fanny Stevenson's suggestion that they might be good enough for a book. Some my mother had rescued from the waste-paper basket (which she always examined carefully before the contents were allowed to be thrown out). One or two were found scribbled on the margins of magazines or on the backs of discarded manuscript sheets. Stevenson thought the verse, "The World is so Full of a Number of Things" not worth printing, but Fanny Stevenson fought for it valiantly.

I, myself, saved several of Stevenson's verses. Those addressed to me, of course (*two of them birthday poems*) I have never given out for publication.

As for Stevenson's books of adventure, I once asked him if he thought he'd have written better books if he'd had his health.

"I wouldn't have written of adventures if I'd been well," he said. "I would have lived them."

ISOBEL OSBOURNE STRONG.

Carpinteria, Cal.

"THIS IS OUR MR. MAWLER, WHO'S GOING TO ADAPT YOUR BOOK."

Railroads and Poetry

SIR:—For his eventual thesis on railroads and poetry, Mr. Morley may also wish to look out for a menu that I remember seeing in a dining car on the Monon Line in Indiana about 1929. It bore, as I recall it, a poem by George Ade, though my notes reveal only a quotation in prose attributed to him: "My first dream as a Hoosier boy was to ride away on the Monon toward the heaven-piercing spires of Lafayette or Michigan City."

J. M. SHAW.

South Orange, N. J.

"The Anointed"

SIR:—Mr. Van Gelder in the *Times* wrote so boosting a review of "The Anointed" that I decided to add it to my summer list—especially on the light side. And I was further piqued when I read a blurb saying this book had a perfectly amazing first chapter.

It has, incidentally. So scintillating that it almost threw me back on my heels. Well then, I was fairly into the story, and I found that in chapter after chapter the tale slid along smoothly and steadily like the "softly-pounding" engines way down in the boats' bottoms which carried. . . ."

Now, if I am not careful I'll be reviewing this book myself, and lose my amateur standing. So just a few sentences more. "Reviewing Reviews" is right. "The Anointed" deserved careful handling from the reviewers. Author Clyde Davis does such a good job spinning his yarn that this reader was able to chuckle at one scrape and adventure after another.

It has plenty of atmosphere and I think for the average man (because I am one) it will be a night's good entertainment. I do hope that Mr. Davis will soon write another novel as provocative, if he can, and as adroit.

G. S. H.

New York City

Francis Brett Young

SIR:—In the last installment of "English '37," the author in speaking of "David Copperfield" said that that book had "enough space to turn round in, and time enough to take things as they come and as you will; it has what modern fiction seldom has, leisure . . . and spontaneity. . . ."

May I suggest for your readers one contemporary novelist who does offer just that, leisure and spontaneity? He is an Englishman and he controls as beautiful a stock of English words and phrases as any man writing today. His name is Francis Brett Young. Read "Far Forest" or "My Brother Jonathan" or "Love is Enough," and see for yourself that he fills what would otherwise be an awful void in modern fiction.

JOHN C. NEFF.

Lakewood, Ohio

Boston Pilot

SIR:—In checking up material for a prospective historical thesis, I have found considerable reference to *The Boston Pilot*, volumes 1-40. I have been able to locate volumes 12-24 but not the remaining numbers, of which volumes 1-11 inclusive appear to be of especial value. I should be very grateful to any one who can tell me where the above volumes may be found.

SISTER MARY GILBERT.

Rosary College
River Forest, Illinois

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"Fuss and Feathers"

WINFIELD SCOTT, The Soldier and the Man. By Charles Winslow Elliott. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1937. $5.

Reviewed by PAUL H. BUCK

THIS, the second biography of Winfield Scott to be published during the current year, easily takes precedence over every earlier work on the subject. Where Mr. A. D. Howden Smith in his "Old Fuss and Feathers" essayed no original research but sought in swiftly running narration to give a popular appreciation of his hero, Major Elliott exhausts every available item of information, presents his findings in detail, makes original contributions in every chapter, and produces what probably deserves to be accepted as a definitive biography.

It is the sort of book that required years of labor. The research is impressive and took the author through manuscripts, files, and records, the greater percentage of which had not previously been used. Everything about the book, including a splendid set of maps and sketches (the acid test of a military biography), has been done with painstaking accuracy and thoroughness. Consequently the qualities which are outstanding in the work are ones which appeal primarily to the scholar,—comprehensive treatment, gaps in knowledge filled, old judgments revised and matured, a notable career explained and its place in history assessed.

And yet there is pleasant reading in this book as well as sound information. Major Elliott has made a studied effort to achieve readability. He succeeds in writing clearly and there are passages whose excellence offsets an occasional heaviness. But what chiefly holds the reader's interest is Scott himself. His long career was inherently significant, even great, and needs no artificial straining for effect. It touched most of the important events of our political history from 1807 to 1865 and brought Scott in personal contact with every President from Jefferson to Lincoln. His preëminence as a soldier rests solidly upon brilliant fighting along the Niagara frontier in the War of 1812, the campaign from Vera Cruz to the capture of Mexico City in the War with Mexico (a campaign which allows even the historian to indulge in extreme superlatives), the training of young officers, and the organization of the army. There was place also in this career for services of a diplomatic nature in stilling the passions of the Aroostook crisis, easing the tension in Charleston during the nullification episode of 1832, and escorting the delicate removal of the Cherokee Nation from the southeastern states. For several decades Scott nursed an ambition to reach the Presidency. In 1852 he secured the Whig nomination only to be defeated in the election and suffer the one thwarted major ambition of his life. Punctilious in dress and decorum, vain and ambitious, egotistic and jealous of his fame, yet energetic in initiative, in crises sober in judgment and dashing in execution, large of stature and impressive in appearance, Scott possessed a personality remarkably self-revealing. His biographer has no need to search for color. It is there in every movement of Scott's career.

Major Elliott makes his major contribution in dealing with Scott's military career. Scott has long been recognized as a great soldier but here for the first time is complete documentation. In this respect also Major Elliott does his best writing. The Mexican campaign is the finest part of the book just as it was the apex of Scott's career. Major Elliott is comprehensive in his treatment of Scott's political activity and produces some interesting new information. But he is not too convincing in making a case for Scott's importance in these affairs. His treatment of Scott's personality is excellent. Strength is revealed without hero worship. Weakness is neither exploited nor suppressed. One is given to understand both why Scott won his success and suffered his reverses.

GENERAL SCOTT ENTERING MEXICO CITY

Humor and Drama on a Cargo Vessel

HARBOR NIGHTS. By Harvey Klemmer. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER LAING

IT was a commonplace of the boom years for young writers, disgusted with their money-grubbing acquaintances, to seek a more elemental experience of human affairs in the fo'c's'le. On shore again, after two or three voyages, they produced books as diversely wide of the mark as "The Royal Road to Romance" and "Boy." The collegiate deck-hand as a type almost vanished during the depression; for even seamen —of all people—learned to keep hold of their jobs in 1932; and greater efficiency in the maritime unions made it more difficult for the experimental mariner to find a berth.

Thus there has been a lull, of late, in the output of seafaring reminiscences by old codgers in their late twenties; and it is just as well. Harvey Klemmer's book will now have a better chance of getting the recognition and praise it deserves. "Harbor Nights" is the only book I have ever read that presents a full and honest account of life aboard—and near—the modern cargo vessel. Its tumultuous picture of wild drinking, hard work, prostitution, thievery, and comradeship, is held together in this book—exactly as it is in life—by the twin threads of humor and sentimentality. Klemmer the writer follows Klemmer the seaman in taking everything in his stride. For him there is no brooding symbolism in the seaman's life: it is merely the most strenuous of careers, on both sides of the waterline. A shipboard brawl of the sort that sometimes produces murders becomes gigantically amusing in Klemmer's prose, which is the way it seems to the participants themselves.

The secret of this attitude lies in the fact that Klemmer, almost alone amongst writers of books in this category, went to sea in the first place because he wanted to be a seaman and not because he wanted relief from the sordidness of the land. Those with the latter attitude, of course, are able only to find more sordidness — and worse sordidness — afloat and on the waterfront. Klemmer by no means underestimates this aspect. In some respects his book is franker than any of its predecessors, both in situation and in speech. But it has the saving, charming grace of showing both sides of the coin. Those who are only less tired of the Hanleys than they are of the Halliburtons should turn with relief and much profit to "Harbor Nights," a book that balances tragedies against belly-laughs, and that is forthright throughout.

Alexander Laing is the author of "The Sea-Witch."

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John Steinbeck

A Portrait

BY JOSEPH HENRY JACKSON

JOHN STEINBECK

Photos on pages 11 and 12 by Peter Stackpole, courtesy Life *Magazine.*

PUT John Steinbeck on a street corner with three or four other men, talking. Then bring along a panhandler: a workingman down on his luck, or one of the wise boys that know how to pick them, or just a wine-bum. Any of the three will choose Steinbeck every time. The workingman recognizes a fellow worker. The wise boy knows the signs of the man who would rather shell out to a faker than take a chance on turning down one who really needs a handout. The wine-bum, in spite of his fuddlement, instinctively understands that here is kindliness, simplicity, tenderness of heart. And each is right. Steinbeck has worked with his hands early and often, on ranches, with cattle, up in the heights of the California Sierra. Because he has been one of them he can never bring himself to risk letting a workingman go hungry while he has anything in his own pocket. As for his essential gentleness, his sympathy, his ready understanding of any kind of human being, those things are as natural to him as breathing.

Salinas, center of California's lettuce industry and lettuce strikes, and by way of being a meeting place for cattlemen as well as ranchers, lies up near the northern end of the Salinas River Valley, eighty miles south of San Francisco. John Ernest Steinbeck was born in Salinas thirty-five years ago. There is German blood in him, and a large admixture of Irish. Tall—an inch or so over six feet—and massively put together, he suggests the Teuton until you look at this face. Then the inquiring blue eye under its perpetually raised eyebrow flatly contradicts the hint of stolidity in his proportions; it is as Irish as his sense of humor, which is enormous. You could probably go a little fey yourself trying to pin down the curiously Celtic quality in a man so solidly and ruddily Germanseeming. That is, you could if he didn't happen to be there to cock an eyebrow at you and stop you with a bunkhouse word. He knows plenty of bunkhouse words. He should, since he has a large acquaintance with bunkhouses and the men who live in them.

His association with bunkhouses and working men began while he was in school. A lot of boys down in the Valley work while they are getting their education; it's a matter of course with most of them. Young Steinbeck was running cultivators, bucking grain-bags, doing odd jobs around cattle all through his Salinas High School days. Later, when he had learned enough chemistry, he worked for a while in the laboratory of the big Spreckels sugar refinery near by. Once he was a straw-boss on a Valley ranch. Cattle, farming, chemistry, it was all the same to him. Even as a kid he was interested in everything. That characteristic has been enlarged and developed by the years.

He doesn't remember now why he decided to go to college or why, having made up his mind, he chose Stanford. Some of his family had gone to Stanford; perhaps that had something to do with it. At any rate, he went up to Palo Alto, made it plain to the faculty that he had no intention of taking a degree, watched the pained expression on the face of the registrar with some interest, repeated that he wanted to study certain subjects but not others, and, having been accepted somewhat skeptically as a student, moved in. That was in the autumn of 1919. Steinbeck is reticent about the details of his college career but the records at Stanford show that he withdrew in the spring of 1920, entered again in the fall and withdrew almost at once, was in residence throughout the academic year, 1922-23, and again in 1924-25. In between times he was working here and there, down on Salinas Valley ranches, in the sugar refinery again, digesting what he had got out of his courses in English and history as taught in Palo Alto, reading widely in such fields as happened to attract him, learning to roll the brown-paper cigarettes he still prefers to the machine-made article, and making up his mind about writing fiction. He did not take a degree. The next step in writing was to write.

In the middle 1920's, as before and since, New York was the place for all ambitious young writers who didn't want to go the whole hog and wind up at the Dôme. Anyway, Paris was more for the Lost Generation, and Steinbeck had just missed the war. So he chose his freight boat and departed for New York by way of the Panama Canal. On the way he learned to his astonishment that plain, ordinary, unloaded dice could be controlled if one knew how. The discovery came to him through the medium of a large and very black sailor and was slightly expensive, but at least it was something to know. He stayed over at Panama, too, picking up another boat later, in order to absorb color there for a book he had in mind, the romanticized life of the pirate, Henry Morgan, which appeared as his first book, "Cup of Gold." But that was afterward. The net result of the dice lessons and the research was that he arrived in New York broke. The thing was to get work.

He got very little. For a while he held down a reporter's job, but that didn't last long. A metropolitan newspaper will hire young men who intend to be great writers some day, but only if the said young men are successful in feigning a consuming passion for the dirty details of a reporter's job. Steinbeck couldn't. A good deal of it seemed like out-and-out nonsense to him, and he wasn't used to being horsed around by a city editor he

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could break in two without half trying. So he found himself out in the street in short order. Still, he had to eat, and when a friend offered to get him a job on the new Madison Square Garden building, he took it and carried bricks as long as there were bricks to carry. Then that job folded up and Steinbeck joined the ranks of bright young fellows who poke around for ideas and try to free-lance them as pieces for the paper. That is one of the best ways to starve in all New York; eventually he saw the point, and headed back for California.

His "Cup of Gold" was written some six or seven thousand feet up in the High Sierra during a winter job as watchman in a house on the rim of Tahoe's Emerald Bay. Once a week Steinbeck snowshoed down to the frozen brink to meet the mail boat and get supplies. The rest of the time he chopped wood to keep himself warm, concluded that not even the most conscientious watchman could have done anything about the giant sugar-pine that crashed through the roof of the big house one night when he was snug in one of the guest-cabins, and went on writing. "Cup of Gold" was his first published novel, but it was his fourth; of the others, two were never shown to any publisher, one was very thoroughly turned down, and all three are now destroyed. He wrote short stories, too, but no one wanted them. Steinbeck went on chopping wood, burning up his stories, writing others until summer came and the owners of the Tahoe house fired him for letting the pine tree fall through their roof. He got a job next day in a trout hatchery only a few miles away. He liked that work, though when you ask him why he only says vaguely, "Oh, all the little fishes!"

Then McBride took "Cup of Gold." That was the year the boom collapsed, but anyway Steinbeck had a new status. The book wasn't making any money at all, but at least he was a published author. He married Carol Henning of San José, California, whose parents had come from the old mining country (her grandfather built the Leland Stanford house, up in the Sierra foothills at Michigan Bluff) and went to live in a tiny house his parents gave the couple in Pacific Grove, a stone's throw from arty Carmel.

The next two years saw publication of "Pastures of Heaven" and "To a God Unknown," both highly praised by the critics and both completely neglected by the book-buying public. Reviewers used fine strong words like "virile" and "magnificent," and referred to the author's "simple, indelible power," which was very good of them. But the Steinbecks could not live on their royalties because there were no royalties to live on. Out in Chicago Ben Abramson, the bookseller, went into a conniption about Steinbeck and bought up all the copies he could find of all his books, including the stock that the publishers had sadly remaindered. But there they stayed, on Abramson's shelves. Nobody else, apparently, felt at all sanguine about Steinbeck. All that most people could see was a new kind of novelist who never wrote two books that were anything like each other. How can you place a fellow like that?

"NO MYSTERY ABOUT HIM"

However, it was Pacific Grove, on the shore of Monterey Bay, that gave Steinbeck his key to the public's heart at last, even to its pocketbook. For when he wanted relaxation, in between periods of writing and morose reflection on where the next meal was coming from, Steinbeck developed the habit of wandering up to the little settlement of *paisanos* on a small hilltop overlooking the bay. Some of them were fishermen, but most were just loafers, enjoying life however they could, always able to postpone thinking about tomorrow as long as there was a jug of rough California wine to be had and a chance to sing, tell stories, or just talk. Somehow they always managed to find the wine, even in those dry days. And Steinbeck had plenty of time to talk and tell stories of his own and drink with them. Out of those *paisanos* came "Tortilla Flat," and for the first time in their joint lives the Steinbecks had a little spare cash. In fact, they had more than a little, for in the first flush of public enthusiasm for the book, the motion-picture people bought "Tortilla Flat." There was some talk of Steinbeck's going down to Hollywood to work on the picture, but the merest whisper of such a thing was enough to frighten him. He loaded his wife and some clothes into a second-hand Chevrolet and hit for the Mexican border. The new Pan-American highway was open, and Mexico City was a far cry from the film city. Let Hollywood try to find him.

Before he went to Mexico, he had finished "In Dubious Battle," which many people have called the best strike novel ever written. He didn't return until that book was ready to come out. By that time, he figured, Hollywood would probably have forgotten all about asking him to come down to work on "Tortilla Flat." He was right, too. Not only had the film executives dismissed that idea, but they had apparently dismissed the idea of making the picture at all. In fact, nothing has been done with it yet. There is a rumor that one well known actor was offered the part of Danny but turned it down as being beneath his dignity. Maybe it is just a rumor.

"In Dubious Battle" had a curious reception. Again readers noted that Steinbeck had written a book that was totally unlike any other he had done. Most of them had read none of Steinbeck excepting "Tortilla Flat," but at least this was nothing like that.

The leftist reviewers were disappointed because there wasn't enough propaganda in Steinbeck's account of the strike. Reactionary readers were also annoyed; Steinbeck told too much about the technique of breaking strikes. Perhaps he was some kind of Red. In California the least suspicion of such a thing is enough; the public in Steinbeck's own part of the country dropped "In Dubious Battle" like a hot potato. That is, most of them did. To its credit, the Commonwealth Club of California saw the quality in the book and awarded it the Club's gold medal given annually for the best novel by a California writer during the previous year. Steinbeck was properly grateful, though he upset the Club members by declining to come and get his medal at the official medal-giving dinner. Wild horses could not have dragged him to a platform anywhere, let alone set him upright and persuade him to go through the gestures of polite acceptance. He regards speeches with horror, his own or others'. Even the Thomas Mann dinner in New York last spring, to which he was unwillingly carried by his publisher, proved too much for him. He managed to sit through the first two or three addresses, but that was all. Friends found him afterward in the hotel bar, staring fixedly into a double brandy-and-soda, still embarrassed and ashamed that men and women who could write so well could stand up in front of an audience and talk such stuff.

The point is that John Steinbeck is a simple, natural individual, not given to pose of any kind, impatient—his only impatience—of pretense anywhere. There is no mystery at all about him, which is why he has been made to seem mysterious by those who cannot understand his simplicity. He does not like publicity, does not feel that it helps him to write, helps his books, does him or anyone else any good whatever. He doesn't go to dinners for the best of reasons; he doesn't like them. He turns down cameramen because he hates being photographed. For years, Sonia Noskowiak, out on the Coast, and Peter Stackpole of *Life* were the only photographers who had taken his picture. He and his wife live very

(*Continued on page* 18)

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

The Trojan Horse

IX. Exhibition Number

THE music is on again, lights are dimmed, partners take the floor. The white stripe across the shiny wood is a reminder, not an actual frontier; couples from both sides use the whole area for gyration; but the accepted etiquette is that both Greeks and Trojans, even in the turn or tangency of the dance, disregard each other and make no attempt to mix.

Boy, that's a pair of lulus old Pandarus has with him. (It's Paris speaking, craning out from the corner alcove.) That must be Cressida, isn't it? I'm glad she's back in circulation, she hasn't been around in ages. Maybe she'll give me a whirl. Somebody's got to butt in: Pan can't dance with them both.

Troilus, keeping well back on the settee, watches Paris approach Pan's table, make his bows with courtly ease, draw up an extra chair and start a triple jugglery of conversation. An expert practitioner! He sits just long enough for manners and then accompanies Cressida to the dancing. That planished space, symbolic of the slippery poise of the whole occasion, is a pretty show, spangled now in shifting stains of colored light poured from above. In the jumbled hazards of rotation the weaving pairs approach and reverse, gracefully veer and pass, asymptote and recede. At the successive cusps of an irregular epicycloid swings agile old Pandarus, gallantly duetting with Antigone. Deiphobus and Antenor twirl Chryseis-Briseis through the latest turbines of choreography: just enough elixir has percolated their ankles to foster an admirable brio. Aeneas and Creusa are more consciously decorous. The bronzed faces of the Greeks, with their fierce and glossy horse-chestnut eyes, are seen above Sanskrit coiffures which show signs of rumple. Menelaus, plodding but not hopeful, is marching a soldierly pattern with some Turkish doxy. Agamemnon, whose shanks are a bit haggard, is sitting it out with Diomedes. Both are neglecting their roxanas to study the dancing. The General notes Chryseis-Briseis in the stringent clasp of Deiphobus-Antenor, and has his own reasons for remembering them severally. As the old canteen joke had it, he knows bitch from t'other. Diomedes, who looks dangerous, follows Paris and Cressida with his gaze. The muted glucose melody moves this human ocean in a smooth surface swing; but underneath, little corals of anger build and build.

Troilus watches too. He is happy to see Paris pay deference to Cressida. Not for anything would he himself wish to be introduced here, in this muddle of noise and color. He is glad with looking, humble to confirm his revelation. Never does woman seem so exquisite to her lover as when she dances with someone else. He measures her loveliness as he could never know it were he closer. Cressida, with her great gift for doing one thing at a time, is surrendered to float and pause; creating the very rhythm she seems to follow. She says little; even Paris is less glib than usual. In a luminous web of star-colored fabric she holds the wide surplus of the dress lifted to one wrist. So slender in that broad fan of stuff her light and tender drift is like a yacht in lazy sail, like a butterfly's idle wing. Given completely to the moment, treading on sheens of broken color, you might think her someone from Elsewhere, ignorant of our clumsy language and our barren ways. But wise beyond any warrant of experience Troilus now guesses her not goddess unapproachable. She is human woman; desirable and desired. And all round that prismed center the will to live, creation's only integral, sharpens, brightens, focusses more close.

When nerves are trimmed so tight, almost any casualty will serve. The specialty of the menu tonight is Sarpedoni's famed Chicken with Noodles, which many of the guests have been enjoying. But Deiphobus, in alcohol's unfortunate habit of insisting on the accidental jape, has found something continuously amusing in the phrase. He and Antenor, in the final eddy of the dance, are slowed up alongside the table where Agamemnon and Diomedes are glowering with one abandoned Sanskrit neglected between them. Deiphobus, in the worst of taste and judgment, thinks it funny to ejaculate to his friend *Chicken with Noodles!* Which the Greeks not unnaturally regard as a personal comment.

The sequel to this appears at the next dance number. Diomedes does the unheard-of. When the music begins he strides briskly across the floor, bows curtly to Pandarus, and ignoring Cressida claims a dance from Antigone. This guileless wench, who indeed scarcely knows Greek from Trojan, is swept onto the floor before she realizes what is happening. So astonished, or indignant, are all others that the two have the space to themselves. The Greeks with a roar of applause shout "Exhibition Number!" The orchestra plays brilliantly, and Diomedes, a magnificent performer, spins the girl into a tango with strong emphasis on all its sinuous and pantomime elements. Antigone, lissom little piece, enters vividly into the spirit of the thing; the skill and speed of their movement are so infectious that even on the Trojan side there is scattered clapping.

But this breach of custom is too flagrant to be overlooked. A murmur of growling protest rises from the Trojan tables. Several armed men appear on the Greek wing of the terrace, in answer to some gesture from their General. As the dance ends Diomedes, with a graceful obeisance to the flush and flattered Antigone, walks back with her to her chair. There is a moment's threatening hush, then the Greeks shout for an encore.

But Troilus, whose head is cooler than most, sees what Diomedes intends. The dance with Antigone was only a subterfuge, an insolent preliminary, intended to impress Cressida. The Spartan bravo, hot with success, will not ask the latter to dance with him, counting on her reluctance to cause a scene.

Paris, standing rigid with anger, accepts Antigone from Diomedes with a stiff nod. Old Pandarus, rising from his chair, is too bewildered for initiative. There is a general movement forward from the Greek side, as though the enemy, a little jaded with Sanskrit, are all about to seek Trojan partners. Sarpedoni, in alarm, and thinking music the best remedy, hurries the band into action.

Things move fast. In the very instant that Diomedes begins to salute Cressida, Troilus has come up from behind. As though Diomedes did not exist, he takes Pandarus firmly and pushes him at Cressida. Your dance I think, he says quietly; and Cressida finds herself rising to take her uncle's arm, while her eyes are caught by this boy with pale brown face and metal eyes. Dance with her, you fool! he whispers fiercely in Pan's ear. This, he knows, is the only recourse. With Pandarus, a civilian and an older man, she will be safe from insult. Paris, coming to his senses, takes Antigone forward. The two couples are out on the floor; Diomedes and Troilus are left face to face.

That dance was taken, says Troilus, quivering a little with anger, but holding himself in. You know the rules here.

Oh really? Diomedes retorts. When did you get so scrupulous?

The Trojans don't use women as weapons.

I suppose you were afraid to let her make her own choice. Some of her family seem to prefer Sparta.

I think you'd better go back to your own side.

Diomedes laughs. She'll dance with me yet.

They might well have been at blows, but by now they are surrounded by a knot of angry men from both armies, in-

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cluding some Greek hoplites with spears. There is a clatter of weapons. Some are holding back the two, others arguing and threatening. The music stops, several couples who had begun to dance move uncertainly to the far end of the floor. with the clang of a bell the emergency sign goes up and is flooded with light.

Gentlemen, gentlemen! Sarpedoni cries. Please, I ask you, remember our license! Please gentlemen, no roughhouse!

Hellenes, to order! shouts Agamemnon. I demand an apology for insults.

Of course, General, naturally. Sarpedoni tries tactfully to wave people back to their places. Ladies and gentlemen, please everybody, only take your seats, everything will be all right, only a little misunderstanding. I apologise to everybody, it's an innkeeper's business. I'm an expert at apologizing. A little quiet please, I order free drinks for the house. Give your orders to the waiters. George, take the orders.

Back to your places, boys, before he changes his mind. This from Ulysses brings a laugh and the tension is eased.

If there's any more disturbance, roars Agamemnon, I shall declare the evening truce at an end. We'll have war twenty-four hours a day.

No, General, no, pleads Sarpedoni. That won't be necessary. Thank you gentlemen, thank you for your consideration. Please, if you will just remember, life won't be nearly so amusing if you are on military duty all night.

Muttering, bristling at each other, the men on both sides draw back, the ladies and their escorts return to their tables, the floor empties. But Troilus strides out into the lighted space.

One moment please, he calls. There is a quality in his voice that compels attention. In his hand he holds a long bronze spear.

I think *I* owe an apology; for the honor of Troy. The mistake I made the other evening was unintentional; an accident; I'm sorry.

A curious pause, with a low murmur of surprise; perhaps of anger on the Trojan side for this humiliation.

But here's another mistake, he cries fiercely. Perhaps not so accidental. Someone dropped a Greek spear on this side of the room.

He holds it out before him, seeming to weigh and balance it with professional interest.

You might like to have it back, he says. Someone might need it.

With a glorious gesture of disdain he bends the weapon into a curve, exerts a passion of strength and while everyone watches in amazement rounds it roughly into a circle, the point fitting into the hollow end of the shaft.

Go and roll your hoops where they belong, he says, and trundles it across the floor. It wavers, and falls by Diomedes.

The roar of the Trojans shakes the roof. By the time Old Soapy gets the house quiet again, and Uncle Pan has a chance to look for Troilus, the boy is gone.

X. Memorandum

You don't think I made a fool of myself?

My dear fellow, I never saw anything so superb. (Uncle Pan unconsciously takes out his monocle, to visualize better in memory.) You kept your head when everyone else was hysterical. I admit frankly, I myself hadn't sized up the situation. (He puts the monocle in again, for reassurance).

What did *she* think about it?

She didn't say much. I think she blames herself: says it was her vanity caused all the trouble.

That's absurd. It was my fault the Greeks were so sore to begin with.

It was Deiphobus' fault for getting tight.

It was Diomedes' fault for dancing with Antigone.

If it comes to that, it was my fault for buying the girls new dresses.

I suppose everything is always everybody's fault, says Troilus impatiently.

My boy, you never said truer word. A very sound doctrine.

Rather cowardly, isn't it?

Well, well, let's not argue. I was only trying to express my thanks for getting us out of a nasty situation. If you want to know what Cressida thinks about it, you'd better get it from herself.

I think it's better to forget it.

I still can't understand why we didn't know you were there.

I was keeping out of sight; on purpose.

Well, you can't go on like that. I'm planning a big dinner-party for Cressida, to reintroduce her to society. I want you to come.

Oh gosh, Pan—I don't want to meet her in a crowd.

People who can twist spears in circles don't need to be so timid.

When I meet her I want to have a chance to talk to her.

You'll have plenty of chance. I'll let you sit next to her.

I hate swell parties. All the big shots there, that sort of thing's paralyzing.

Big shots—I detest the phrase—are only small shots who have kept on shooting. If you insist, though I say it reluctantly, I'm a big shot myself.

No, the kind I mean have a much noisier backfire.

You haven't heard me in the War Council.—Well, I tell you: come and have tea with me first, and I'll ask her too. Then you can get to know each other.—But when you come to the dinner you must pretend you're meeting her for the first time. I'm not going to start any gossip.—Now I must get along; I'm busy.

Wait a minute, says Troilus, after a moment's thought. Maybe it would be better to meet her in a crowd after all. You can sort of pick up ideas when you hear a lot of people jabbering.

Come and have tea anyhow, and we'll see what happens.

Hold on, you can't go like that. Let me think this out. What would I talk about?

Good lord, man, you've got a phobia. Buck up! You'll talk about whatever she wants you to. Women are trained to take care of that.

But I'd be absolutely tongue-tied.

What, a man who can write poetry like you?

That's different. People write poetry just for themselves. That's why it's fun: it's absolutely private. Nobody in the world knows about my stuff but you.

Hm. Yes. Quite so. Well, old boy, my nose is itching for the grindstone.

Honestly, Pan, if you don't help me I can't come. I *won't* come.

What do you mean? Do you expect me to dictate a conversation for you?

Splendid. Just the thing. Give me an outline and I'll work it up.

All right, we'll make it simple. Just five points, and you can use your five fingers to remember them by.

(Troilus is delighted, and gets paper and stylus to make notes).

First, says Pandarus, well, let's begin with something complimentary and personal. Say something nice about her clothes. She's got that rather on her mind just now. Not too sudden or obvious, but give the idea you've been thinking about them.

True enough; I have. Okay. First, something about clothes.

Second, why not ask about her amusements. Has she been reading anything, playing any games, seeing pictures? She hasn't, but that might start something.

Second, amusements, Troilus notes.

Third, why not politics? That's timely enough just now. Fourth, if you find yourself in trouble, the weather. And Fifth, if you need a Fifth, be a bit confidential about yourself. Probably she'll have got you onto that long before.

It looks awfully scanty, says Troilus doubtfully. Well, I'll think about it. He checks the points on the fingers of his left hand.

I'll phone you. Take care of yourself.

Pandarus is gone. Troilus looks at his memorandum, shows a sudden revulsion, crumples and throws it down in disgust:—

My beautiful, my beautiful, must I know you?—Why can't I just have you to myself, in dreams?

(To be continued)

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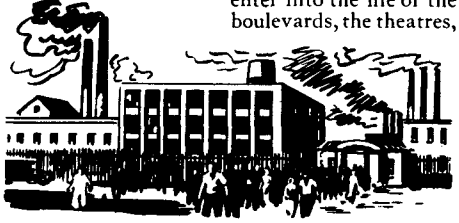

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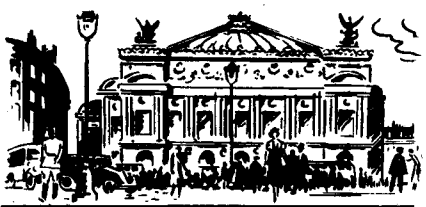

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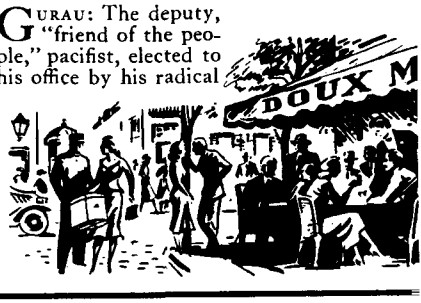

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edges, dedicated to the cause of social justice, seems like a revolutionary to some but a mere arliamentarian to others. He is sincere, courageous, and clever. His only weakness is his aving for prestige and power, and that is the chilles' heel by means of which he is finally rrupted by the oil and munitions magnates. 'ith him you enter the councils of the powers

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* * *

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* * *

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Boy Against Death

THE RED PONY. By John Steinbeck. New York: Covici-Friede, 1937. Limited to 699 copies signed by the author. $10.

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

"TORTILLA FLAT" and "Of Mice and Men" were not accidents. It is unlikely that anything Mr. Steinbeck publishes will be casual: he is a controlled, deliberate and ascertained workman. In this little book he again shows himself equal in power and in sensitiveness, and purposeful in both. It would not be fair to suppose that because "The Red Pony" appears in a de luxe limitation that he (or his publisher) regards it as hors d'œuvre. It may be a sketch of some shape of things to come; it may be a mood (of memory or fancy) that the author prefers to keep within restricted bounds. It has on it his own mark of beauty and pain.

It would be possible (as it always is possible) to read into these three episodes in the life of a ten-year-old boy some larger meanings and suggestions. Is it the first glimmering in the boy's mind of the collapse of faith or certainty? For first the death of the pony, and then the death of the mare in bearing another foal, are attributable (in the boy's mind) to Billy Buck who knew all about horses. So Billy (a notable character portrait) proves fallible after all. That is one suggestion of fable that the reader may find; and there are others. Mr. Steinbeck is a writer of such gauge that we enjoy speculating what he may have intended between the lines. It is an impertinence: but he has earned the right to be subjected to it. As in the book before us, we know by the sound of his tread on the floor that he is wearing riding boots; but the boy always looks under the table to make sure.

These three episodes are told with illuminated simplicity. Steinbeck knows what effect he desires, and he gets it without fumbling. In the first we have the gift of the Red Pony, its training, its tragic death. The second chapter is a charming interlude — ostensibly quite apart from the theme—of the old *paisano* who comes to the ranch (because he was born there) and, finding himself *de trop*, rides off into the mountains to die, on the old horse that is also ready for death. And the third chapter (or fable) is of the breeding and birthing of new promise—the colt to come. So we have the boy Jody, in his ranch-childhood, encountering Death on three planes: the last time in all the blood and disgust of an equine cæsarian. And the buzzards, and the gold-hilted rapier, and the emphasized thematic opposition of the mossy spring uphill in line with the frightening black caldron where the pigs are slaughtered: all these elements are thought, focussed, and intended.

So, I repeat, Mr. Steinbeck knows what he is doing; he does it thrillingly; in theme as well as in its deliberately restricted publication (although the three sections have appeared as short stories in *The North American Review* and *Harpers*) this is a book for comparatively few. But the few are important, and sometimes they eventually prevail.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE MURDERERS OF MONTY *Richard Hull* (Putnam: $2.)	Four bright young Londoners plan joke on dull young Londoner; joke goes much too far, and Yard is called in.	Good writing and characterizations insufficient to save obvious plot founded on incredible situation.	Clever but silly
THE STRANGE CRIME IN BERMUDA *Elisabeth Sanxay Holding* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Vanishing of mysterious Mr. Malloy, who invited H. Grier to Bermuda, casts suspicion of murder on guest and puzzles Insp. Jesser.	Atmospheric, deftly written tale, with love-potions, death berries, touch of witchcraft, romance, superlative dialogue, and fantastically surprising finish.	Excellent
THE HONKONG AIR-BASE MURDERS *Van Wyck Mason* (Crime Club: $2.)	Capt. Hugh North runs into amazing mass of intrigue, murder, plot, counter-plot, etc., over air-plane secrets in Orient.	Apparently authentic background, vast amount of dashing around, all sorts of spies—male and female—and North invincible as ever.	Passable
THE DOOR IN THE WALL *Laurence W. Meynell* (Harpers: $2.)	Young Englishman in Eastern European town unwittingly plunges into whirlpool of intrigue threatening international peace.	Action runs mile-a-minute and scenery is pleasantly picturesque but behind it all you hear the machinery grinding.	Formula stuff

John Steinbeck

(*Continued from page* 12)

simply; not in Pacific Grove any more but farther back in the hills, away from the water entirely, in Los Gatos where they built a small house with the "Tortilla Flat" movie money and furnished it with loot from their Mexican trip.

Steinbeck has one superstition common to many writers. He won't discuss a book he is writing until it's done and sent away to his publisher. All he will say now, for instance, is that he is working on the first of three related longer novels. All you can be sure of is that they won't, any of them, be anything like any book he has written before. At this writing, Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" is still up among the ten best fiction-sellers after seven months. The play, written with the help of George Kaufman, is about to go into rehearsal and will burst on Broadway this winter. What it will do is anyone's guess. It should make a good play because it was written for just that reason. Perhaps the most indiscriminately praised book of the year, "Of Mice and Men," came into being as an experiment. Steinbeck wanted to see how like a play he could write a short novel. No more and no less. Not more than one or two critics in the whole length and breadth of the country saw the point. You can give Hollywood good marks for shrewdness, however. This time they came after Steinbeck hard. And though he considers Hollywood second only to New York as a bad place for a writer to go, he almost weakened and went. Six weeks at a thousand dollars a week makes six thousand dollars, and Steinbeck knew exactly where he could put his finger on three thousand agricultural workers down in the Valley who didn't have two dollars apiece to pay their union fees. If Pascal Covici hadn't flown out to the Coast to talk him out of it, he'd have gone, too, and for just that reason. You see, he really knows about these workers. The only time he has ever deserted fiction was last year when the Scripps-Howard San Francisco *News* got him to write a series of articles about the transient labor camps in California. He has not been quite the same man since he saw how those people had to live and learned something about their problems.

But in the end he didn't go to Hollywood. Instead, he and his wife went to Scandinavia—on a freight-boat because he has the habit of freight-boats—not to write about that part of the world but because they both liked what they'd heard of it. In fact, Steinbeck felt about Norway and Sweden and Denmark and those places very much as he felt when he went to work in the trout hatchery. They sounded interesting. All those little fishes.

Joseph Henry Jackson, book critic of the San Francisco Chronicle, *is the author of "Mexican Interlude."*

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Lineage of Eustace Tilley

(*Continued from page 4*)

tors, army officers, planters, even parsons, anything but literary men. They were superseded by professionals, and in a way the rise of professionalism signalized the decline of American humor. On the one hand, it was absorbed in the novel. Having given fiction instruments, types, a manner, and a new occupation, having permanently shaped the American novel, humor forfeited the field in which it has most justified itself. One main stream of our humor, probably the principal one, has since then flowed through the novel.

But the amateur humorist yielded not only to the novelist but also to the professional funny man, whom Mr. Blair calls the literary comedian. Humorous magazines flourished during the forties and fifties, and the last few years before the Civil War saw the birth of the columnist and the comic Lyceum lecturer. They were usually different phases of one career. Artemus Ward was the first nationally famous one, Mark Twain was the greatest (he was foremost in most aspects of our humor), and to the genus belonged most of the men whom criticism speaks of as humorists. Petroleum V. Nasby, Orpheus C. Kerr, Bill Arp, Josh Billings, Eli Perkins, the Danbury News Man, and Bill Nye are merely the most celebrated of dozens.

To generalize too sweepingly, most of these humorists turned from the absorption in native character that had marked their predecessors to explore the resources of purely verbal humor, the wise crack, the parody, the set piece, the scrambled association, the unexpected turn, the mere joke. They were joke-makers, only incidentally satirists, and never writers of fiction. With them humor forsakes literature and becomes a department of journalism—topical, lively, ad hoc, well paid, and popular, but ephemeral. Little of what they wrote can be read with amusement today. Hooper and Thompson of the older school are still fresh, but Bill Nye is as unreadable as the sermons of any minor Puritan divine, only a historian can endure Orpheus C. Kerr, and even Artemus Ward is in great part obsolete. Again the process shows clearly in Mark Twain. "Huckleberry Finn" is immortal, but "Sketches New and Old" is dead and mummified.

An Amerikan luvs tew laff and these comedians flourished through the remainder of the century. In a different phase they flourish today. Our humorists stand squarely on their shoulders, though there are only a handful of humorous magazines where there used to be dozens, though mass production has standardized most of the newspaper product, and though humor, revisiting its oral sources by way of the radio, is debasing them.

When, in delicate tribute to the intuitions of this magazine, the last Writers' Congress elected a literary comedian President, he vindicated us by remarking in his inaugural address that the cruelty and injustice of modern American life had produced what he described as the insane humor of today. A funny man must work at his trade, but if Mr. Stewart is to be a spearhead of revolt, he should study his ancestry. Our various Golden Days must have been hideous with cruelty too, for Mr. Stewart and his contemporaries have only played variations on themes and in forms which their more robust great-uncles had by heart. The "Parody Outline of History" was written by Bret Harte in the sixties and was rewritten by a good many of his contemporaries in the next few years. "Aunt Polly's Story of Mankind" and Mr. Stewart's other books glimmer through Mark Twain, Sol Smith, John Phoenix, and a dozen more. If you turn to page 448 of Mr. Blair's collection you will encounter "The Treasurer's Report," and Charles Clark was only making respectful acknowledgment of a situation and a mechanism grown elderly in our humor. Mark Twain was doing Corey Ford's stuff before he wrote "The Jumping Frog," and was but following after the ways of his fathers. By insane humor Mr. Stewart means only humor which derives its laughs from erratic association. And so long as there has been verbal humor in this country, which is much longer than there has been literary humor, there has been that deliberate exploitation of psychological dissociation. The literary comedians who specialized in it after the Civil War presented themselves as Perfect Fools, whereas our comedians present themselves as Perfect Neurotics. There is no other difference; themes, styles, situations, all were there in great-grandfather's time.

We still luv tew laff but humor as a literary form exists but precariously in America today. On the one hand, nearly every novelist has to be a journeyman humorist; on the other, what amuses us today has little in it that can carry over to tomorrow. Since Dunne our political satire has been toothless. Since George Ade only Don Marquis has attained the stature of his forefathers. The verbal humor of the daily press is stereotype, stencil, and formula. Fantasy, once a powerful yeast of the national humor, has all but departed from literature and has sought regeneration in the animated cartoon. Let us, for decency's sake, say nothing of the radio skit—after all, there has always been feloniously bad humor.

It is significant that the best of our current humor has evolved a new kind of fiction. The true and most flourishing successors of the southwestern school are to be found in *The New Yorker*. Mr. and Mrs. North, Hyman Kaplan, President Galbraith, Ruth McKenney's Sister Aileen, and their like are blood relatives of Major Jones, Simon Suggs, and Sut Lovingood's Pa. Like their ancestors, they issue from the life immediately at hand, they speak the living language, and their vitality springs from a rich and delighted perception of the human animal as it really is. In Clarence Day, in James Thurber, and occasionally in those who conscientiously follow their ideas, the new form rises higher. Mr. Thurber is like Mark Twain at least in this: whether he is playing it straight or writing wild extravaganza his humor derives from a sharply individual and deeply philosophical intelligence that is oriented by a comic sense of life. If fiction has contributed a good deal to this humor it is but returning a loan made a hundred years ago which was invaluable to the American novel.

Buoyancy and exuberance, the earliest qualities of our humor, are hard to come by these days. Most of the poetry is gone too. The language of immigrant groups, of such metropolitan entities as the Bronx, and of the rural places which our humorists visit on vacation effectively maintains the philological tradition. But the snapping turtle will never bark from the canebrakes again, tall talk is done forever and cannot be counterfeited as Caleb Catlum abundantly makes plain, and the successors of the Sazerac Lying Club are small bore, though bores indeed. American humor came of age in the ecstasy of first testing the qualities of the American tongue in print, but the dew and breeze and colors of that sunrise can never be revisited.

All these are missed but there are greater losses. We could use Mr. Dooley, these troubled days—Mr. Dooley and the noble line of his peers, who spoke so much more savagely and so much more courageously than any speaks to or about our statesmen and masters today. The republic would be both a happier and a securer place if a post-depression Nasby or Ward appeared to speak its mind about, well, say, the Supreme Court and the Ku Klux Klan. "Alone in Cubia" has not been followed by "Alone in Utopia"—a frightening weakness in our literature, and plain proof that something ominous has happened to America.

There is a still greater tragedy. We could not spare the elegant Mr. Eustace Tilley nor any of the distorted figures at whom he sometimes briefly glances through his eye-glass. But neither he nor they are full compensation for the passing of Colonel Crockett, the Big Bear of Arkansaw, Brother Jonathan, and other figures once large against the sky. What American literature needs most today is a blood transfusion from those myths. There are vast sun-spots this year but they do not mean, as they once did, that Colonel Sellers is blowing us a kiss across the universe. It will remain a lesser literature till they mean that again. But do not despair. Like Tyl Eulenspiegel, of whom he may well have been the late nineteenth century avatar, Sellers is immortal. He and Jim Smiley and their whole company are certain to return, changed but recognizable, when American literature again strikes a major chord.

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Toward a New Liberalism

THE GOOD SOCIETY. By Walter Lippmann. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by GEORGE C. HOMANS

THE doctrines of the collectivists have captured the imaginations of men. Whether they are communists or fascists or hope that collectivism can be brought in piecemeal by the machinery of democratic government, many of the intellectuals are convinced that any further advance in the well-being of civilized peoples is possible only if their affairs are directed by a bureaucracy which has full power and a "plan."

If the collectivists, instead of denouncing them, had talked with the managers of the great corporations, they might have learned that the demand for men who have the proper qualities for administration is always greater than the supply. They might have learned that the larger the organization, the more difficult it is to adapt it to new methods, new inventions. If these things are true of the management of corporations, how much more are they true of the management of nations? Yet the collectivists propose to govern nations as corporations are governed, by decree. The problem can be solved if the objective set for a nation is immediate and limited. In wartime the government of every country is a dictatorship. But it is incredible that the planners should believe that a benevolent dictatorship can direct the economy of a rich country so that it shall continue to expand on every front, when all our experience has been that this result is secured only by the concurrence of the undirected energies of many men.

It is incredible, that is, only if we forget that the logic of the planners, the logic of such men as Beard, Chase, Mumford, and Laski, is the logic of sentiment, their experience is the experience of sentiment. As Disraeli would say, they are so anxious to improve man that they have forgotten his nature.

The industrial revolution, according to Mr. Lippmann, committed civilization to a system of world-wide exchange of goods between specialists in large-scale production—the system of the Great Society. He goes so far as to prophesy that this system has such advantages that it will survive the damage done it by any totalitarian regime. This may be too hopeful. Great exchange economies have been destroyed before, and the collectivists may destroy our present one, either by violence or by dry-rot. What Mr. Lippmann certainly would argue is that we cannot continue to improve our standard of living unless we stick to the Great Society.

In the past liberalism stood for government not by men but by laws, and Mr. Lippmann is a liberal in this sense. But he feels that liberalism lost its appeal when it began to argue that these laws ought always to be a particular set, roughly speaking, those under which the first J. P. Morgan worked. And in fact people came to take certain laws, the law of incorporation for instance, so much for granted that they forgot that these laws could be changed in the public interest. The problem is not so much how to change our economic system as how to adjust our social system to it. If this adjustment is to preserve the virtues of the economic system, it must be made not by the arbitrary decrees of men but by progressive changes in the laws governing the relations between men.

Such, in brief, is Mr. Lippmann's argument in "The Good Society." He talks good sense about the nonsense of the collectivists, and his program for the future is the only one which in the name of high ideals does not promise to land us in a situation worse than the one we are in already. But the human beings he talks about are often abstractions of real human beings. You will hear much about principles in this book, but little about the sentiments of men. This sometimes leads to absurdities. For instance, Mr. Lippmann is talking of the higher law which ought to prevent one man's arbitrarily imposing his will on another, and he says: "For if there is no higher law, then there is no ground on which anyone can challenge the power of the strong to exploit the weak, there is no reason by which arbitrary force can be restrained." But if a man has been injured by a tyrant, does he look for any grounds other than his anger before he takes up arms? He may say that he is acting on some principle or other, but surely the principle is but a rationalization of his anger. The sentiments in fact are the things that put Mr. Lippmann's program in danger. He admits this, saying wisely: "To-day, as in other great periods of disorder, the strongest convictions are held by men who, whether they mean to or not, aggravate the disorder." There is reason to believe that the conditions of industrial society increase the amount of such irrational behavior.

But "The Good Society" is an essay in persuasion, and in order to persuade men to take a certain course the effective reasoning must be translated into another and more spicy language. The language of principle is such a language. "The Good Society" is a wise and useful book.

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Disease in the Body Politic

MACHINE POLITICS: CHICAGO MODEL. By Harold F. Gosnell. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by JOSEPH F. DINNEEN

THIS is a political scientist's cold-blooded, factual report of the progress of disease in the body politic in the city of Insull and Capone, and at times resembles the impersonal dictation of the surgeon during the autopsy to his students in the clinic.

It is not written for the Monday musicale or afternoon bridge trade, but it will be well thumbed in Palo Alto, Washington, D. C., and Hyde Park, and will probably find a place in the libraries of Call-me-Jim Farley and John Hamilton. It is a complete job of city political reporting and has in it almost everything about the Chicago voter and office holder except what he eats.

Such things as a City Hall wheel horse who made a modest half million on city junk pop out at you among prosaic sentences about sewerage disposal and party harmony. These odd and unexpected revelations give one a start. Depending upon what came out of Chicago via news wire services, I did not know until I read it here that Anton Cermak was accidentally assassinated because he took a ride on the wrong bandwagon and that he really went to Miami to make peace with Roosevelt. Maybe the 18-karat political commentators and syndicated trained seals thought it was bad taste to mention it at the time.

Bath-house Johns, ward heelers, and precinct captains of any city who have been wondering what has gone wrong with the political racket lately can find out by studying Dr. Gosnell's book. (You have to study it. You can't read it.) But from their point of view, they won't find there what to do about it unless they get religion and turn honest.

He makes a number of suggestions at the end of his book for the simplification of jungle ballots, but I would be afraid of them. I never saw an improved ballot yet that couldn't be rigged, and the "cultural lag" in politics is something I find it hard to worry about. His political factoral analysis of Chicago, reducing everything to algebraical equations, looked to me like an interesting experiment, but when I found that in such an equation with third order coefficients of partial correlation "h" turned out to be a political clown like Big Bill Thompson, "v" the median rental, and "z" equaled the Roosevelt vote, I shook my head and said "The hell with it, I'm no Einstein." There are only eight pages of that to skip. The rest is well worth the investment.

Joseph F. Dinneen is the author of "Ward 8," a story of politics in Boston.

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The First "Modern Age" Books

KALTENBORN EDITS THE NEWS: EUROPE, ASIA, AMERICA. By H. V. Kaltenborn. Modern Age Books, Inc. 1937. Paper: 35 cents. Cloth: 85 cents.

MEN WHO LEAD LABOR. By Bruce Minton and John Stuart. The same.

Reviewed by ROBERT C. BROOKS

WHEN Mr. Kaltenborn began his "radio editorship" in 1923 he inaugurated a new profession, a profession which now enrols hundreds of practitioners whose aggregate influence must be enormous. Fathers of institutions, as a rule, are foolishly fond of their brain-children. Not so Mr. Kaltenborn: in his introduction to the present volume he notes with strong disapproval the prostitution of the radio by one-way-only propagandists in Italy, Germany, Russia, and other dictatorships. At the same time he indicates clearly the various pitfalls that beset news broadcasting under democratic governments.

Ordinary editors practise their profession planted firmly in capacious swivel chairs. Radio editors like Mr. Kaltenborn are quite, quite different. They cover the whole world not only in the journalistic but in the physical sense as well. They interview dictators, presidents, prime ministers, and leading statesmen in Berlin, Rome, Moscow, London, Washington, Nanking, Tokyo, and a half dozen lesser capitals—all in rapid succession.

Of course this is not editing; no matter how vivid and thrilling, it is merely a new method of reporting. To Mr. Kaltenborn's credit be it said, however, that his book contains a great deal more than reproductions of news broadcasts. While necessarily confining himself to the "high spots" of each country which he discusses, he shows excellent critical judgment both in the selection of facts and in comment thereon. Particularly is this true of his pages devoted to the Spanish Civil War. While his sympathies are obviously with the Loyalists he manages nevertheless to present the case of the Insurgents with conspicuous fairness.

In "Men Who Lead Labor" an excellent and most timely job has been done by Bruce Minton and John Stewart. The co-authors deal at considerable length with William Green, William Hutcheson, Edward F. McGrady, John L. Lewis, Heywood Broun, A. Philip Randolph, Harry Bridges, and, more briefly, with several minor union leaders. The history of the American labor movement since the death of Samuel Gompers, and particularly since the outbreak of hostilities between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O., bulks large in their pages. Messrs. Minton and Stuart make no pretense of impartiality They are strongly against the A. F. of L.; strongly for the C. I. O. and political action. The sketches of William Green—"Ghost of Gompers," and of William Hutcheson—"Success Story of a Bruiser," live up fully to the rather vitriolic subtitles. Scott Johnson's cartoons greatly enliven the text.

As among the earliest specimens of the new paper-bound Modern Age Series which aims at low prices via mass production, these two volumes reflect great credit upon the publishers.

BABIES WITHOUT TAILS. By Walter Duranty. New York: Modern Age Books. 1937. Paper: 25 cents. Cloth 85 cents.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

NOT all of these short, often succinct, tales are successfully carried off. They represent a famous correspondent at his second best. Two, for instance, "Witch of the Alcazar" and "The Magic Egg," are dependent for whatever framework they possess upon such mumbo-jumbo as mysterious potions, magical passage through time and space, and so forth. Others, like "Under Sentence" and "Lucky in Love," are simple melodrama, served up straight without blinking. On the other hand not one of the stories is without that element which makes everything Mr. Duranty writes interesting: true perception of human nature, subtly noted and lucidly set down. Flimsy of plot or not, each tale is peopled by beings who are unquestionably real, warm, vital, sprawling, indigenous to the new communist Russia. In toto this little book carries forward Mr. Duranty's steady and brilliant laboring to make known to us the character of the people of Soviet Russia. A word should be added about this new format. This is the first of the Blue Seal Books, put out by Modern Age between heavy paper covers to sell at 25c. It seems so well put together, in the matter of paper, margins, type, and general readability, as to augur a happy future for the project.

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Escape from Dante

THE TRANQUIL HEART: Portrait of Giovanni Boccaccio. By Catherine Carswell. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1937. $3.50.

Reviewed by ERNEST BOYD

SIR WALTER RALEIGH once described the "Decameron" as "the escape from Dante," meaning thereby, not merely what the ribald reader might think, but also that in this famous work Boccaccio surpassed his master as a writer of Italian prose. To the average reader, however, it is as the author of the "Decameron" that Boccaccio is known, and the average reader, to whom Mrs. Carswell's book is presumably addressed, is not much concerned about Boccaccio's superiority as a master of early Italian prose. The "Decameron" was publicly burned by Savanarola, and ever since has incurred the wrath of all known and unknown Comstocks. "Ill-printed copies are offered surreptitiously for sale by purveyors of pornography. Few great classics," says Mrs. Carswell, forgetting Rabelais, "have been relegated to so dubious a limbo." Will those to whom this is the main fact about Boccaccio derive any satisfaction from this popular biography? My guess is: none at all. Mrs. Carswell relegates the "Decameron" to a minor place in her narrative and is much more concerned with all the other incidents in Boccaccio's well-filled life.

The author's own explanation for this book is that she is a woman and Boccaccio is unique in that he wrote "avowedly for women readers," yet she is the only woman who has written about him. . . . "I have felt that something of Boccaccio's essence has been ignored because the writers were all men." Thus Mrs. Carswell challenges comparison with the authorities, nearly fifty in number, listed in her select bibliography. Even the non-specialist, if at all interested in the subject, will have read such works as Edward Hutton's "Giovanni Boccaccio: a Biographical Study," H. Hauvette's "Boccace," or T. Caldecot Chubb's more recent "Life of Giovanni Boccaccio," and will naturally ask whether Mrs. Carswell has supplemented or superseded them.

The life of Boccaccio in its essentials is that of the coadjutor of Humanism with his friend Petrarch — the foster-father, as someone has said, of the movement whose father Petrarch was. Like the latter he was an enthusiast for classical studies, but he was also the author of the first "novel of psychology ever written," as Edward Hutton has said, referring to "Fiammetta." When Boccaccio, having written a life of Dante, lectured on him at Florence, fifty-two years after Dante's death in exile from that city, he repaid a debt of gratitude to the great poet who had so highly praised his early writings to Petrarch, then wholly indifferent, as a Latinist, to literature in Italian. Many Dante lectures have been delivered since that time, and thus Boccaccio, in addition to his claims as the founder of the picaresque novel and the novel of character, became the "first Professor of Modern Literature" and, as Sir Walter Raleigh puts it, "incomparably the most distinguished writer who ever took up with that uneasy trade." The "Decameron" brought him the fame and popularity which cause his name to live today, and it was the source-book of poets from Chaucer and Shakespeare to Shelley and Tennyson, besides inspiring a host of imitators: Bandello, Margaret of Navarre, Straparole, and others. Apart from this work, his life was that of a Renaissance scholar, unmarked by any very remarkable adventures or incidents common to his age. For those interested in that period, lives and studies of Boccaccio are as essential as lives and studies of the other great figures of the Renaissance. Mrs. Carswell has faithfully performed her task, but it is impossible for me to discover wherein her sex has equipped her to supplement or supersede her predecessors.

Charmed by Snakes

SNAKES ALIVE AND HOW THEY LIVE. By Clifford H. Pope. New York: The Viking Press. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by C. H. CURRAN

IF you were asked how fast a snake can travel you would probably state a figure in excess of ten miles an hour, and the possibility is that your guess would be much higher. The speed of snakes, because of their build, and the fact that they disappear so quickly when in their natural surroundings, is extremely deceptive. An army marches for forty-five minutes of an hour, covering three miles. The fastest snake in the United States does not do quite so well. It makes just three miles in an hour, and it is doubtful if it has the stamina to keep going at such a speed for that length

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of time. It is therefore obvious that, even though there may be faster snakes than occur in our country, they would not be able to catch a running man.

In addition to having an entirely erroneous idea about the speed of snakes we are likely to be just as ignorant in other respects. For instance, we may believe that they can charm us, and that they do a multitude of other things that are utterly impossible. We may believe in milk snakes and hoop snakes and that snakes lie in wait for unsuspecting humans in order to crush them to pulp. None of these things is true, nor are many other popular beliefs.

If anyone was ever charmed by snakes it was Clifford Pope. He played with them from "before he could remember" and even as a child lay for hours studying them in their cages. Pope grew up with snakes. They have always been his chief recreation and scientific interest, an interest that has taken him to China where, for four years, he not only collected them for The American Museum of Natural History, but studied them in their natural habitats. With a background such as this he is well qualified to discuss their habits and in "Snakes Alive and How They Live" he presents a thorough survey of all the multitudinous facts that have been learned about them up to the present time. There is nothing pertinent that one might wish to know about snakes, whether it be how they crawl, how they eat, how they kill their prey, how their venom works, or how to treat snake-bite, that will not be found in this work, which is amply illustrated by photographs and line drawings.

Among the features of the book that will appeal to herpetologists and students in particular are the chapters on classification and the key to the snakes of the United States. This latter is so simple that the tyro should be able to use it with a little practice.

"Snakes Alive" will prove of great popular interest and will be of inestimable value in the classroom and on the shelves of serious students of the Ophidia.

The Roots of Tyranny

GOLIATH, THE MARCH OF FASCISM. By G. A. Borgese. New York: The Viking Press. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

THIS book should have a sub-title: "An Exile's View of the Tyranny Which Sent Him Forth." The fact that "Goliath" is the considered view of a scholarly exile, a man who scorns to be a protagonist even in the cause of liberty, a man who holds an equable balance, who rarely writes under emotion, makes this book most valuable. It is probably the most intelligent account of Italian fascism and incidentally of the similar tyrannies in Germany, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Spain that has been written. For Mr. Borgese is a scholar and a literary critic. Before his day of exile, he was considered one of the most authoritative literary critics in Italy. He has written a novel which had a wide reading and was translated into many European languages. This is no journalist's hasty Sunday supplement story. It is not aimed at the newspaper reader. Though the man in the street can read it, for it is not loaded too heavily with erudition, the book will not excite him. But it is deliberately temperate, and excepting perhaps the chapter on Mussolini, where the author lets himself go and apparently is bubbling with wrath, the philosophical detachment with which the story moves will please those readers who would see both sides, who would like to know what are the racial roots of the new tyrannies in Europe. Such a reader will enjoy "Goliath."

Mr. Borgese squares off for his task deliberately. He goes back to Dante and the myths of Rome, and covers his Italian cultural background by discussing the political implications of the Machiavellian point of view. He builds up a chain of social and political evolution from Machiavelli to Garibaldi and Mazzini and Cavour. He ties this little Italy that grew around Italian nationalism in the last quarter of the old century into the Italy of d'Annunzio which rose with delusions of grandeur during and just after the war. His chapters on the war statesmen, Nitti, Sonnino, and Orlando, are models of scholarly understatements of the Italian case and cause. His biographical pictures in those chapters devoted to the resurrection and second death of Italy are gorgeously done—portraits of Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, d'Annunzio, and the obscure country editor and socialist agitator, Mussolini.

After the story of the war, the author hurries through the days of defeat and frustration into the march on Rome. There the drama of the book begins. There the reader will find how blessed is a good narrative style to a man who writes history. The tragedy of the story emphasizes its nobility. At the end one closes the book with a feeling that one has been talking with a scholarly gentleman, who has deep convictions and few prejudices and who can write a good page, a beautiful chapter, and has actually written an important book.

Devil or Man?

SIR RICHARD GRENVILLE OF THE REVENGE. By A. L. Rowse. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1937. $3.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

"HE was devil for aught they knew" is Tennyson's summing up of the Spanish verdict on the man who had dared to sail his one little English ship into the midst of the Armada. He had matched the *Revenge* against the entire Spanish fleet, had inflicted irreparable damage upon the haughty galleons, and had died, proud and unbroken, a boast on his lips. To his foes he was a portent and a diabolic mystery; to succeeding generations of his own countrymen he has become a deathless legend—the epitome of reckless courage, the unflinching hero who by one action won a place abreast of Drake and Rodney and Nelson.

Quite apart from the valorous last action, it was a bold, adventurous career, typically Elizabethan in its diversity. As soldier in Hungary and Ireland, as administrator of his west country estates, as theoretic searcher for the fabled Northwest Passage, as premature colonizer of Raleigh's Virginia, as privateer and sea captain, Grenville was all of a piece—the austere, dominating, aristocratic daredevil whose humanity was questioned by friend and foe alike.

The full-length biography of such a figure has been a difficult undertaking. J. C. Squire once projected it, but a dearth of materials forced him to lay it aside. The necessary family papers had been lost or destroyed; there seemed to be nothing out of which to build it except the story of Sir Richard's last adventure, and that was already every schoolboy's property. But Mr. Rowse, coached in the modern school of patience and tireless research, has combined diligence with perspicacity, and has produced a book which, for all its gaps, is as thorough a study of Grenville's exploits and personality as we are ever likely to have.

"But it's not done—dash it!"

—That's what the English will undoubtedly say to this very revealing book by an Englishman who, for once, is *not* reticent.

UNDERSTANDING THE ENGLISH

By James Howard Wellard

American readers will chuckle with delight as they follow the author's witty analysis of character, society, manners, attitudes, morals and humor in a land whose history, so he says, has been largely moulded by "rain on the roof, beer in the stomach, heathenism on the mind—and perhaps the discomforts of suet puddings." "Wise, witty and neatly humorous," says R. L. Duffus of this informative and penetrating volume. $2.25

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The New Books

Fiction

AND POINTS BEYOND. By Percy Marks. Stokes. 1937. $2.50.

Once again Percy Marks writes a novel of a young man which is so full of sincerity and understanding that it cannot be casually labeled "light stuff" or "sentimental tripe." He tells the story of Tommy Gray, who at twenty-nine has just been made a junior partner in an ultra-respectable and dignified New York law firm, specializing in trustee work and never touching upon the vulgarities of court practice. Tommy has been through an early marriage and divorce. During the past few years he has been drifting: doing his work well enough, seeing a host of casual friends, enjoying music and art exhibits, and living easily upon what he earned and what he had inherited from his father. Gradually he wakes up and realizes that unless he immediately gets a hold upon himself, he is doomed to a thoroughly futile and second-rate life. Through an astonishingly vital lady artist he meets the girl he falls in love with. And in the end he boldly cuts loose from all his old ties and starts off with her to make a solid place for himself in a new community where he will be really on his own.

Summarizing the plot makes the book sound hopelessly trite and Polyannaish. Actually Percy Marks takes this commonplace theme and makes it reasonably important. For he knows how to analyze modern young people and he appreciates their problems. And he creates in Tommy Gray a real personality. His novel is well written and for the most part clean of obvious moralizing. Now and then the characters tend to make pretty speeches disclosing all their aims and ambitions in life. But usually Tommy's career is reported vividly and naturally. "And Points Beyond" will not please the ultra-sophisticated but its appeal, on the other hand, is not limited to the usual class of light novel readers. It is a sincere and skillful study of our times, well worth looking into.

W. P.

THE RETURN OF KAI LUNG. By Ernest Bramah. New York: Sheridan House. 1937. $2.50.

Great is Ernest Bramah, and Kai Lung is his prophet—or, at least, he is Kai Lung's amanuensis! To be sure Ernest Bramah's full signature reveals the name of E. B. Smith. And this seems to involve another mystery fit to defy solution by the Augurs or the Sacred Sticks,—nay, even sleuthing according to the most classic Barbarian models. But it is enough that we have before us, in this successor to "Kai Lung's Golden Hours" and "The Wallet of Kai Lung," the luxuriant efflorescence of a fertile fancy involving the mystery of the ill-starred Mandarin T'sin Wong's missing queue.

Oft of one wide expanse had we been told that Ernest Bramah ruled as his demesne—and now, at last, we have traveled in those realms of Orient gold. The circumlocutory circumspection of the style adopted, at first exerts a benumbing influence upon the positively third-rate intelligence of the present reviewer, a condition wherefrom he is revived by the subtle elaboration of the nonsensical narrative, and refreshed by a gorgeous fabric of humor woven as from silkworms of wit. To old Brahmans this gorgeousness is familiar. Therefore it only remains to say that in this instance the thoroughly delightful Hwa-che, disguised as one of the other sort, sets out to solve not one but two extraordinary thefts by adopting the Barbarian system whereof the greatest known exemplar "inhales the acrid fumes of smouldering weeds and wraps about his form a flowing robe of talismanic virtues." The arisements and involvements that follow are a mixture of Edgar Wallace and P. G. Wodehouse conducted in the most elegant Oriental fashion. The characters of the Mandarin, of his faithful and berated Chin-Tung, with whom Hwa-Che finds final happiness, of many other denizens of the mud-walled city of Kochow, of the Emperor Ming Wang, his Empress, and his Grand Chess Master, Lao Pun—not to mention the ferocious members of the Hanging Sword and the Avenging Knives—all these are deliciously presented. To com-

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THE
SATURDAY
REVIEW

pare the present book with the earlier ones is beyond the present reviewer's discretion, but he feels that Bramah-lovers will not be disappointed, since his own initiation through this one volume has converted him immediately into one of that ilk. Naturally enough the fantastic tale is studded with jewels of elaborate humorous expression—"laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere"! It is the most subtle and excruciating form of burlesque.

W. R. B.

THESE LOW GROUNDS. By Waters Edward Turpin. Harpers. 1937. $2.50.

This is a novel of four generations of Negro life, a large part of which is acted on the Eastern Shore, a region not often made the theater of fiction. Revelations of life among the oyster shuckers have therefore the charm of novelty; and Mr. Turpin has neither patronized nor glorified his characters, on whose moral delinquencies he passes few judgments, and on whose achievements he wastes little praise. What the novel seems to lack is focus. A "generations" novel has perforce to move up or down some scale of values or eddy around some crucial focus, but "These Low Grounds" mainly drifts on and on. There seems to be no reason why there should not be more or fewer generations. If it was Mr. Turpin's purpose to paint on a broad scale Negro life in the upper South and in New York, he is not incisive enough to create dramatically moving characters. The style is competent, but lacks bite and color, except in three or four episodes which rise above the general low plateau of the book and which, for that reason, are memorable. All in all, it is to be feared that "These Low Grounds" is simply another novel of a certain competence.

H. M. J.

THOU ART THE MAN. By Richard Blaker. McBride. 1937. $2.50.

From the oilfields of the modern world to the battlefields of Old Testament Palestine is a longish step, but Mr. Blaker negotiates it with the greatest of ease by treating the story of Saul and David, and the latter's celebrated affair with Uriah's wife, in much the same fashion as the present-day intrigues of his earlier novels. He is primarily concerned with certain resemblances between the blood-feuds of Biblical times and the gang warfare of our over-civilized cities. "Gangstership, Generalship, Kingship" is his concise summary of a life such as Saul's, and similarly his characterization of David, the prepossessing young harper and successful careerist, suggests one of our more gifted customer's men of pre-depression days. Unlike George Moore and others who have attempted to recast Bible episodes for modern readers, Mr. Blaker follows traditional outlines as far as plot is concerned, save when emphasizing economic factors in the life of the Semitic tribes. It is on the whole a convincing and sufficiently dramatic piece of work, and is well written except when the author's aptitude for purple prose runs away with an otherwise vivid and satisfactory style. Considered purely as fiction, the story may seem a trifle disorganized, and the lack of any consequential heroine may puzzle the author's large library public. By thus abruptly changing his subject matter, and by the skill with which he has handled a difficult theme, Mr. Blaker demonstrates his capabilities, however, and writing this book must have given him a welcome respite from the usual grind of the popular novelist.

T. P., Jr.

A DEEPER ROOT. By William Chace Greene. Little, Brown. 1937. $2.50.

This is the life-story of Abbie Stedman, eldest daughter of a Quaker family living in a small New England town in the 1880's. One more chronicle of a frustrated life in a restricted setting, undeniably true, sincerely written, and not without charm, it does not attain the significance, the revelation of "victory in defeat" which it strives to express. The first chapters have more weight and interest than the later ones; in the early chapters, that tell of the death of the man Abbie loves, Mr. Greene shows an unusual quality of emotion. We are convinced of the depth of Abbie's loss, and know that her personal life is broken beyond repair. Hers is only one of several tragedies that strike the Stedmans, and the book is largely the story of how the family as a whole surmounts its difficulties.

Mr. Greene, in common with the run of novelists today, lacks the art of tell-

(*Continued on page* 30)

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THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD

By Zora N. Hurston

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

IT'S the first real autumn evening out at The Fantods, poor old Q.'s sylvestered cabin on L. I., and the first wood fire; and he has to decide whether to spread some cushions on the floor and lie there reading the new and less costly edition of *The Quest of the Perfect Book* by William Dana Orcutt (just issued by Little, Brown), formerly too expensive a book to lie down on the floor with for reading which is Old Q.'s favorite way. Or whether to sit upright and compile some notes on trade. ☞About the first of November the American Booksellers' Association plans to make its presentation of 200 more books for the White House library; a committee is now working on the selection of titles. ☞Lovers of fine printing will be interested in the news that a chapter of Frank E. Hopkins' unpublished autobiography, dealing with the De Vinne and Marion Presses, has been issued (only 250 copies for sale, at $3.75) by the Columbiad Club of Meriden, Conn. Orders should be sent to G. T. Bailey, Drawer 1729, New Haven, Conn. ☞Ralph Henry of Carson Pirie Scott, Chicago, writes us that *A Portrait of Barbara,* written by Max Siegel of Carson's own staff had over 600 advance orders in their book department. ☞Frank X. Howard, formerly with Dutton's, is now at the Chaucer Head Book Shop, 22 East 55 Street. ☞A book to which we look forward with painful interest is volume 2 of the Notable American Trials (Doubleday), viz., *The Trial of Bruno Richard Hauptmann,* by Sidney Whipple.

☞It is good to know that Putnam's are about to publish (October 8) a volume of selected poems, *The Bulls of Spring,* by the late Jake Falstaff. The death of J. F., two years ago, took away a personality of richly mingled virility and sensitiveness. ☞Hollander and Davidson have opened a shop for fine and rare, with an attractive first list, at 602 West 6th Street, Los Angeles. ☞Harpers' report a larger advance for *So Great A Man* than for any other Harper first novel since *The Able McLaughlins.* ☞Quercus Minimus remarks that while waiting for F. D. R. to go on the air the other evening he happened to read in James Russell Lowell's essay on Lincoln: "No higher compliment was ever paid to a nation than *the fireside plainness* with which Mr. Lincoln always addresses himself to the reason of the American people."

☞Bill Weber of Scribners' says: "Re *Blood on the Moon:* there's a belief down in my neck of the woods that the saying comes from a Lenape Indian tradition that spots, clouds, reddish color, etc., on the moon signified the coming of war. At present used in northern New Jersey to signify political combat, mainly local. In three months running the Red Bank *Register* carried the headline *Blood On The Moon In Middletown* when a school board scrap was raging." ☞Further news of Bill Weber is that he has a new rowboat on the Shrewsbury River; its name is *Arachne* which involves a pun that we leave to our classicists to puzzle out.

☞When I was on my vacation, Old Q. continues, just behind our camp there was a little pine wood that I had to hide in when the moon got so bright it hurt my eyes (I have weak eyes from working too hard) and that pine wood always made me think of a story by Wilhelm Hauff, a forgotten writer of German folk tales long ago. ☞Mrs. Balsam Pilloes also wrote a poem which I liked. It is called On Finding Under My Bed Some of Those Curly Fluffs or Goofer Feathers That Look Like Soft Gray Kittens; and the poem is:—

Little pussies of dust
Disturb You I must:
Stroked with a broom—
Scat, out of my room.

Mr. and Mrs. Pilloes harmonize this, with unforgettable sweetness, to the tune "Happy Birthday to You."

☞Intellectual concerns: while climbing a mountain deliciously called Pokamoonshine I met a burly Princeton professor, very out of breath. We sat down under a cliff of moss to puff and blow, and he began complaining about English spelling. What can you do (he said) with a language that has the word *ghoti?* Old Q. doesn't know the word, we said. ☞It's not anything that grows on your chin, he said (he was self-conscious about this, not having shaved for some days) but a perfectly familiar word if you pronounce it according to regular English canons. ☞*gh* as in *enough*—*o* as in *women*—*ti* as in *nation;* and what do you get? You get *fish,* spelled *ghoti.*

☞Balsam Pilloes has tried it again, but it won't do. Evidently he has been typing hard, for his poem says:—

Old carbon sheets! I hold them to the light:
Impacted thin, and blurred,
I see the lines I wrote last night—
Ghosts of the purple word!

☞That's pretty, Balsam, but we can't print it because the word *impacted* never suggests anything but wisdom teeth.

☞After nearly twenty-five years on swanky Fifth Avenue, Dutton's, Inc., one of the oldest bookshops in New York City, moved to the more exclusive Park Ave. (270), and opened shop in their new quarters Sept. 13th. This move marks the fourth location change since the founding of the business in 1852. Founded by Charles A. Clapp, the bookshop has always retained its family identification and, today, its activities are carried on by its president, Mr. Henry Clapp Smith, grandson of the founder. The new Duttons occupies two floors. The ground floor carries current books, fine bindings, stationery, and greeting cards. The second floor is divided into several large display rooms carrying first editions, rare and old books, a children's book room, general offices, stock and shipping space. The entire layout is ably designed to impress visitors with the spirit for browsing and an unhurried feeling in the selection of books. We wish the new Duttons well.

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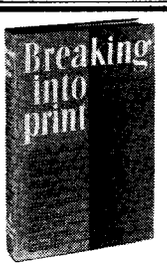

Last Friday *The Inner Sanctum* published *Breaking Into Print* (price $2.75), a series of intimate papers by twenty noted authors, telling about their first experiences in being published.

Your correspondents believe that there doesn't breathe a lover of books with soul so dead that these pages won't excite him. ELMER ADLER, an editor of *The Colophon* and the man who arranged the series for that celebrated quarterly for bibliodisiacs, has brought these essays together in this book. A brief summary of some of them follows:

ROBERT BENCHLEY
Offers some rare Benchley items at bargain rates.

PEARL BUCK
Who expanded her first published short story into her first published book.

THEODORE DREISER
Who tells of the delays and disappointments in publishing *Sister Carrie.*

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER
Tells how he wrote his first biography in middle life.

SINCLAIR LEWIS
Whose first printed words "A good time was voted by all" appeared in 1899.

WILLIAM McFEE
Who was at sea when his first book appeared and never bought a copy.

H. L. MENCKEN
Torn between chemistry and poetry at fourteen he decided to become a poet.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY
Who first appeared in print while he was a Rhodes scholar.

EDWIN A. ROBINSON
The entire edition of his first book cost less than our copy fetches today.

In addition to these essays, each of the twenty contributors tells how he writes, whether he uses the typewriter or more old-fashioned instruments, how many drafts he makes before sending the final manuscript to the printer, how many changes he adds on to proof.

To all collectors this anthology just oozes with first-edition value; to all would-be writers [their name is legion—Ed.] it teems with hard-won wisdom; to all book-lovers it affords a rare opportunity to go behind the scenes with their favorite books and authors.

—ESSANDESS

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The New Books

(Continued from page 28)

ing a story, or the will to tell it, and his book does not hold the reader. He has, however, the unusual virtue of creating characters who are positive in their power for good. Abbie and her mother, most of all the father, are beneficent—warmly and richly alive. We can understand the respect and love John Stedman commanded in his town. He is, in fact, so real, so completely in the round, that he is not thought of as a character in a book.

C. C.

THEY NEVER GET TIRED. By Catharine Macadam. Stokes. 1937. $2.

This first novel is a highly colored, lively extravaganza that borders occasionally on slapstick. It is a diverting picture of a blowsy, bohemian family, who lead their untidy and eventful lives in a big house with a porte-cochere, on the outskirts of Greenwich. They are people we have seen innumerable times, blondined, frowsy, and irrepressible, in New York theatre-lobbies, in hotels, and on steamers. Miss Macadam, with a good deal of scientific detachment, has isolated them and their private lives for our amusement. Her detachment saves the book from being merely cheap and sensational; we admit her penetration and cleverness, and realize that she is a showman, lifting a curtain to reveal a fantastic burlesque. If she were less cool, less sure of her values, the book would be nothing but triviality; as it is, we accept her picture, and the central implication of her comedy, which is, that to these people with Restoration manners and morals, their own behavior is conventional and the ordinary modes of life outlandish. Miss Macadam is shrewd and deft, and probably headed for popular success.

C. C.

Miscellaneous

WILD ANIMAL WORLD. Behind the Scenes at the Zoo. By Raymond L. Ditmars and William Bridges. Appleton-Century. 1937. $3.

Once again Mr. Ditmars, now an old favorite with the public, and Mr. Bridges, rapidly rising as a new favorite, double up in one book. They are an unbeatable pair, like a a couple of tennis champions, with Mr. Bridges, the ex-newspaper man down at the net, placing snappy journalistic chapter-shots wherever he wants, and Mr. Ditmars in the back court, catching the high slow balls of reminiscence and lobbing his memories gracefully back to us across half a lifetime of intimate experience with creatures large and small, gentle and fearsome. The authors do their best to dispel a lot of animal myths to which the public clings fanatically, such as the story of a mother snake swallowing her young. They try to show how the ostrich's way of flattening herself out like a heap of old feathers, while incubating, may be the origin of the head-in-the-sand myth. They play upon the theme of albatross superstitions (*vide* "The Ancient Mariner") and include one that was new to me, namely that the albatross dies as soon as you take it north of the equator. There is a good photograph of a rattlesnake pouring himself backwards and forwards over a circle of coarsest rope, so dispelling thereby the old story that cowboys sleep inside the loop of the lariats to be safe from "sarpints."

Mr. Ditmars is at his best in talking of snakes and other reptiles. Personally we like lizards best, and are never tired of reading about the glass snake or legless lizards who are supposed "to shatter at a touch." It has never been our good fortune to see one of these astounding creatures in the field, so we lap up information about them. Others may prefer to read about the fishing worm twelve feet long. There are photographs and information on the giant South American rats, the giant rhinoceros beetle, more about vampyre bats. In fact the book is a parade of all the funny "animiles," walking, swimming, flying, wriggling or inching along as best they can. A thoroughly delightful job!

D. C. P.

Travel

THREE DESERTS. By C. S. Jarvis. Dutton. 1937. $3.

Fortunate indeed were the desert provinces administered by Major Jarvis, for they had in him a man whose personal interests paralleled the needs of Egypt, and, most important, an official whose wry humor could be diminished by no adversity in the twenty-one years of his residence there. First in Lybian Amria, then in the Kharga Oasis, and finally in Sinai, where he served, one assumes, admirably as Governor, he maintained the strict conviction that the Higher-Ups at Headquarters were idiotic. It was absurd, he felt, to think that the desert tribes could ever be made tractable by civil servants with no sympathy for them nor any knowledge beyond their office files. The Bedouin were a pest, but Major Jarvis liked them, and because he was an ardent gardener and a charitable psychologist he was able to improve their desolate land while protecting them by court justice from themselves.

It was the Arab who had ruined Sinai, he believed, who had turned the "reasonably wooded" country of two thousand years ago into a waste—the Arab and his camel and goat. It was the Arab himself who had nurtured his own people's discontent; the former judge at Amria was wont to jail the entire village to avert trouble, a system which was apt to cause some "unrest." Major Jarvis changed that promptly, helped the prisoners with a sort of occupational therapy, and learned from his own vegetable garden (fertilized with dead dogs and camel bones) how best to improve the Egyptian crops.

Major Jarvis was a sprightly Governor. When he was not exploring the desert (once with a prince who rationed his party on Napoleon Brandy and snipe-and-truffle pie) he was cross-breeding the nomad dogs, or inventing water-cooled dugouts, or excavating Roman relics. Judged by these reminiscences his years in the desert must have been mostly amusing. He tells of them engagingly, with the informal art of an expert raconteur.

H. D.

PERSONALS

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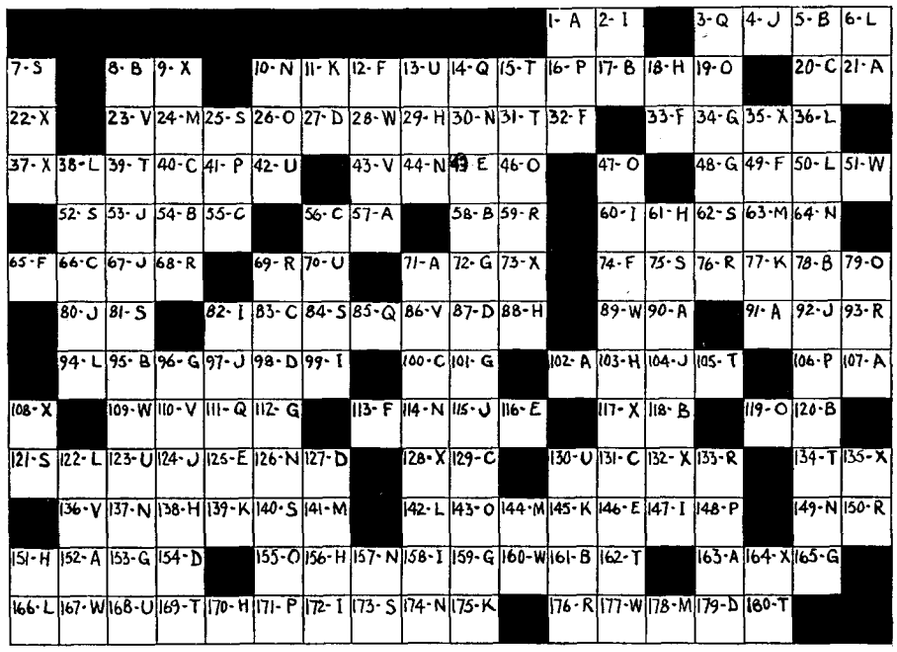
Double-Crostics: No. 183

By ELIZABETH KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's International Dictionary.

The solution of last week's *Double - Crostic* will be found on page 14 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Chews.

B. Formed into a whole.

C. Pertaining to singing.

D. Felling.

E. Popular schoolboy story by Farrar (1858).

F. Inside information (slang).

G. Helen of Troy's husband after Paris.

H. Appraised.

I. Grandeur.

J. Those in authority.

K. Recorded.

L. Painstaking.

M. Shield or protection.

N. Denunciations.

O. Lady proverbial for patience.

P. Fates (Teutonic).

Q. Son of Aphrodite.

R. Absolute reality (Transcendentalists).

S. Balked, baffled.

T. Prop.

U. Somewhat remote distance or future.

V. Singularly.

W. Rose O'Neill's dolls.

X. Gift of finding agreeable things not sought for.

WORDS

1	163	21	152	107	102	91	71	90	57
8	120	118	54	5	78	95	58	161	17
83	20	55	129	56	100	40	131	66	
98	87	179	27	154	127				
45	116	125	146						
74	49	33	32	113	65	12			
165	153	34	159	72	101	48	96	112	
18	138	103	156	61	29	88	170	151	
158	172	60	147	82	99	2			
80	53	115	92	67	4	124	97	104	
145	11	77	139	175					
94	6	50	166	38	122	142	36		
144	178	63	24	141					
157	126	114	64	10	30	137	44	174	149
155	46	119	26	79	143	19	47		
16	106	171	41	148					
111	85	14	3						
69	176	93	133	76	59	150	68		
81	121	75	25	173	140	84	7	52	62
134	15	105	169	39	31	180	162		
130	70	13	168	123	42				
43	136	23	86	110					
51	109	89	28	177	167	160			
9	132	108	73	164	22	117	37	128	35	135

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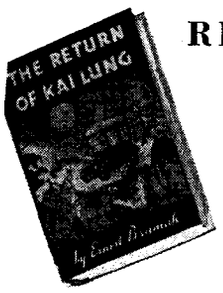
THE RETURN OF KAI LUNG



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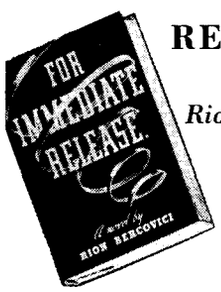

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